Routledge Research in Byzantine Studies

SECULAR BYZANTINE WOMEN

ART, ARCHAEOLOGY, AND ETHNOGRAPHY OF FEMALE MATERIAL CULTURE FROM LATE ROMAN TO POST-BYZANTINE TIMES

Edited by
Sophia Germanidou

Secular Byzantine Women

Secular Byzantine Women examines female material culture during the Late Roman, Byzantine, and Post-Byzantine eras to better understand the lives of ordinary and humble women during this period.

Although recent scholarship has contributed greatly to our knowledge of Byzantine and medieval women, such research has largely focused on female saints, imperial figures, and prominent women of local communities. What about secular and non-privileged women? Bringing together scholars from various fields, including archaeology, history, theology, anthropology, and ethnography, this volume seeks to answer this important question. The chapters examine the everyday lives of lay women, including their working routines, their clothing, and precious possessions.

This book will appeal to scholars and students of Byzantine history, art, and archaeology, as well as those interested in gender and material culture studies.

Sophia Germanidou is currently a Marie Curie Fellow in the School of History, Classics and Archaeology, Newcastle University. Her main interests include Byzantine iconography, vernacular architecture, and the investigation of rural activities in medieval communities.

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Preface

Angeliki Laiou, the renowned Byzantinist and second woman elected a member of the Academy of Athens, when commenting on her intention to take part in the XVI International Conference of Byzantine Studies in 1980 with the paper "The role of women in Byzantine Society," observed how the unprecedented proposal was considered (rather negatively) by her colleagues. However, she proved to be an early exponent in the emerging field of Gender Studies, because by the late 1970s, the first significant publications on the medieval women of the western Middle Ages had begun to be published. Almost ten years later, in 1991, Alison Wylie, the Canadian philosopher of archaeology, in the seminal volume *Engendering Archaeology: Women and Prehistory*, analyzed the underlying causes of the question "why is there no archaeology of gender?" in which she addressed in-depth the methodological and research problems of (patriarchal) archaeology: "… femininity becomes inaccessible in archaeological contexts because of lack of resources, socio-political and economic conditions and above all, because archaeology operates much more closely to its image than its practitioners like to admit."

Of course, since then, there has been tremendous progress in the fields of historical and iconographical studies into Byzantine women. We are now aware of the roles, living conditions, appearance, and actions not only of female saints and nuns but also of the court aristocracy, the upper urban classes, and of the local ruling hierarchy. Recently, "ordinary women" are also being investigated – those working or operating in public life, be they in the countryside, engaged in outdoor tasks, or those at home, multi-tasking in various ways. This anonymous mass of common and everyday women, among the "invisible…marginalized Others" as intriguing stated by Linda E. Mitchell in the Introduction of *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 43/1(2017), is definitely not homogeneous in its make up – and it is not the purpose of this volume to distinguish between them; nonetheless, we find it opportune here to treat them collectively so.

On the other hand, it is in the scope of the essays to reach out to this relatively unknown, "silent" multitude in this volume, to bring forward to our attention some groups of these working women: the indigent ones, the

Figure 0.1 Ruth gathering grain while meeting master Boaz, with whom she eventually got married. Manuscript miniature, Octateuch, Athos Vatopedi 602, folio 460v, 13th century (© Vatopedi Monastery, Mount Athos).

slaves, and the drudges, those that laboured in the house and the fields, the virgins and the spouses, of all ages – girls, young, middle-aged, or elder ones (**Figures 0.1 and 0.2**). It is in this group that we are seeking, among others, the "stamp" of their existence, in the (humble) objects they left behind, the (few) texts they were involved in and the (neglected) images they inspired, aspiring to cast light on the wider perspectives and the specifics of their life circumstances.

The volume is divided to three parts and an apprendix. The first part investigates unpublished archaeological testimonies and material expressions of ordinary women's vanity: objects of beautification, and of low-cost and common manufacture. The second part is more prolonged, as expected, since it combines inter disciplinary approaches related to women's daily labour routine: iconography, historical sources, bioarchaeology focus on the critical context of the (hard-) working women in "menial" and manual tasks. The third part juxtaposes a manifestation of the simplest earthly delight, dancing, to the attempt of ascribing a "transcendental" quality to

Figure 0.2 A 12 year-old girl grinding in the handmill, Inner/laconian Mani, southern Peloponnese, Greece. Photograph, 1970s (@Photographic archive of Giannis Vourlitis, published in *Picture bible of Mani,* Adouloti Mani: Athens 1990).

lay women of Early Byzantine times. A "glimpse" at women from the side of ethnography contributes, even rudimentary, to the understanding of the multifaceted working chores that women undertook – and perpetuated – up to the recent times, in house and in the fields.

The majority of the articles is geographically centered to Greek territory. However, there are short references to the artistic and other evidence of the Balkans, Europe, Anatolia, and Mediterranean. The main time period is vaguely the Byzantine era; however, contributions deal with Late Roman up to Post-Byzantine contexts. The volume is accompanied by detailed indexes as well as abundant pictures from manuscripts, wall-painting, minor-arts objects, photographic archives, including maps, tables, and plans.

This scholarly attempt to reconstruct the images of these women face some matters, indeed problems of methodology and interpretation, already identified by previous scholars. They still remain open and detrimental, in various degrees. Here is a list of a few of them:

- The male-centric bias found not only in the written sources handed down to us (almost entirely composed by literate men of their times,

addressed to same-sex well-educated public), but also of long established traditions of research. Extreme feminist approaches to the subject can prove also equally misleading.

- Until a few years ago, more specifically focused Gender Studies volumes, theses and articles that collected information from a wide range of historical, artistic, and archaeological sources were limited in number. This lack resulted in women being treated only incidentally and circumstantially as "subjects" rather than extensively and detailed as "objects" of the inquiry.
- The fluctuating chronological, cultural and geographical contexts in which many studies are conducted (and of necessity the present one too!) don't add to a clarified approach of the subject-matter. However, despite the confusion pertaining to methodology, this research path can lead to interesting comparisons, arguably opening up challenging horizons.
- The investigation of Medieval/Byzantine female working/labour opportunities is an essential academic development of our time, currently "streaming." Issues such as the female apprenticeship, the part-time/occasional/permanent working activity, the acquisition of specialized skills, and the practice of unusual professions or ones requiring unexpected physical strength (for example in salt pans or watermills), over and above the risks, difficulties and the "gender-pressures" they were exposed to, make up a large part of this volume.

At this point, we should stress that long surpassed is the previously thought domestic seclusion of women; their energetic presence in various spheres – ranging from outdoor work to the marketplace, all done alongside keeping the household running (impressively parallel to modern-day women), is progressively well documented. Adding here, in theological terms, the very interesting figure of the "active virgin," the so-called and considered "feminist" persona of Christian times.

- The woman's focus in her appearance – through her clothing, jewellery, hairdressing, cosmetics and other beauty aids, is already an established field of research. Of particular interest, however, and still neglected in academic studies, is the expression of femininity by those women who had limited means or did not have the resources to satisfy their vanity. Inquiring into the appearance and low-cost solutions devised by these women, both in the workplace and at their leisure, offers a much-desired glimpse into their everyday life and the research of material culture in a more general perspective.

This volume is thematically dedicated to women, it is written by working women – but it is not just addressed to women. In all the research approaches here represented, the male persona remains strikingly present and

Figure 0.3 Adam reaping and Eve carrying sheaves. Panel from an ivory casket, 10th or 11th century (public domain ©Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York).

this has a catalytic effect on the shaping of their living and working conditions (**Figure 0.3**). In whatever role he plays – as a partner and assistant, a customer, even as a tyrannical figure, he inevitably enjoys the primary role, takes centre stage.

I owe heartfelt thanks to all who contributed to the birthing of this volume – that really was a women's job! They have placed their trust in me and spent heavily of their energy and time, gifting the volume of essays with much original material from a wide range of sources – archaeological, iconographical, historical, and ethnographic. This has proved of true benefit, because through this methodology, involving multiple sources and interdisciplinary approaches, there emerges this multi-faceted likeness of the secular, ordinary woman and in so much detail. I hope they enjoyed the efforts expended, when they behold the result; moreover, keeping sight of the big picture, they can "identify" themselves with the multiple roles that women have always taken on.

I am grateful to the Professor Ecaterina Lung, Historian-Medievalist at the University of Bucharest, for doing us the honour to join us, sharing her insightful thoughts on the subject and introducing the content of the volume. Her article "Depictions of Women in the Works of Early Byzantine Historians and Chroniclers. Between Stereotype and Reality" in the journal *Historical*

Reflections/Réflexions Historiques 43/1(2017), 4–18, is one of the most recent contributions to issues such as the emotional outbursts of women or the mirroring them as "legitimate" sexual objects.

My warm thanks go also to the ever-active Maria Leontsini, Senior Researcher at the National Hellenic Research Foundation, Section of Byzantine Research in Athens. She has contributed to a great extent to the first phase of the venture, assisting, advising, and encouraging us.

A great part of the study is owed to the highly skilled and quick-working ladies, Georgia Karaiskaki and Pepi Nikolaidou from the National Documentation Centre of the National Research Foundation in Athens, that so eagerly locate and provide useful and expert bibliography.

My best friend and colleague Alexandra Konstantinidi was very helpful to me through the various stages of the venture; I thank her cordially for all her input.

One man has been behind the whole initiative, and its final realization is thanks to him: Michael Greenwood, editor of Routledge Publishing, who was always open-minded, ever helpful, and available to resolve the many matters going with the publication of the volume. I thank him cordially for the confidence he showed – not only in me personally, but also in the project he accepted, evidence of his far-sightedness. Many thanks should also be addressed to the assistant editors, who were in charge of solving the numerous issues that come with such a publication. I hope with their assistance this volume will add to the pioneering and high-quality publications on less highlighted academic subjects.

Last but not least, the family always plays the most significant role in a woman's life; and it isn't otherwise for me. I express my gratitude to my husband Vasilis, and my children, for their understanding, support, and unconditional love.

Abbreviations

Textual

cf.	compare
cod.	codex
ed.	editor
eds	editors
gr.	graecus (Greek)
MS	manuscript
nr.	number
nrs	numbers
trans.	translated
vol.	volume
vols	volumes

Measurements

cm	centimentre
d.	diameter
h.	height
km	kilometre
l.	length
m	metre

Bibliographical

CIL	*Corpus inscriptionum latinarum*
LCI	*Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*
PL	*Patrologia Latina*

Note on the spelling of Greek names and other language conventions:

In order to standardize the spelling of Greek proper and place names, we followed some conventions applied only to this volume so as to avoid confusion and achieve relatively homogeneity. Accordingly:

- the Greek -η- is transliterated as -i- such as Messinia, and the Greek -ε- in -e- such as in Panteleimon, with the exception of established or anglicized names such as Manuel, Komnene, Venice, etc.

  The convention does not also apply to the names of the authors.
- "Saint" is in both cases of holy figures or names of churches.
- Time-periods are capitalized.

Introduction

Ecaterina Lung

A volume which proposes to study the "unheard voices" of secular, lay women is not another fashionable attempt in the now long line of works pertaining to gender placed within a multidisciplinary approach perspective. Today, the idea of linking Gender Studies and the research focused on Byzantine culture is some decades old, and there can be some disagreement relating to whom we should consider as the "founding mothers" of the issue. As said in the Preface, Angeliki Laiou was, in the 1980s, one of the pioneers of the gendered approach to the social and economic history of Byzantium and it was not until the early 1990s that the issue attracted wider scholarly attention, as shown the foundational collective volume edited by Liz James.[1] Since then, works dealing with gender in the context of the Byzantine culture multiplied by scores, as can be seen from the always expanding international bibliographical resources, but there is still work to be done in order to embrace the complexity of the lives and actions of women during the millennium in which the Eastern Roman Empire existed.[2]

So, the volume proposed by its editor and authors responds to a perceived lack of scholarly attempts focused on the lived experience of Byzantine femininity based on wider categories of sources pertaining to different areas of representation, circulation, and reception in society. These sources deal with different categories of women than those usually found previous works. If elite women, or at least those coming from the well-off milieux are now better known due to the pioneering works of ground-breaking researchers like Angeliki Laiou, Linda Garland, Judith Herrin and others following. There is a lot to do in relation to those coming from less privileged groups, be them simple working women, artisans, slaves, courtesans.[3]

One of the main merits of this volume is that it aims to deal with non-elite women, and this poses the problem of where to find them. A major difficulty comes from the nature of the available sources, the written ones being focused on empresses or lay women from the aristocracy, and in a lesser proportion, on religious ones. Furthermore, the written sources were usually created by men and even when the author is a woman, like the princess Anna Komnene, the ideology underlying her work was the same as of her contemporary male fellows.[4]

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Older historiography used historical narrative works for the reconstruction of women's lives and experiences. They were considered the best sources.[5] These kinds of written sources were not the only ones available, but they were preferred for being more vivid; more related to literature than the law codes or archive documents; and less biased than the writings authored by clergymen. Even if there were differences between categories of written narrative sources, the overall impression they gave was that women were thought to be inferior, irrational, highly emotive, and unable to control their impulses. Byzantine (secular/lay) women were seldom given an identity of their own, and when this did happen, they were almost always thought to be a reflection of a male.

Historians and chroniclers from Byzantium believed that the ideal behaviour for women was to remain secluded in their houses. However, when they wrote about real individuals, they were almost always those who didn't confine themselves to the women's quarters. Church Fathers believed that a woman can reach salvation if she became a man, meaning that she achieves the spiritual fortitude they thought to be a male prerogative. Similarly, the authors of historical narratives claimed that women's main avenue of entering written history was to behave like men, renouncing their gender and acting in an independent manner. This was not seen as something positive because, to quote Leonora Neville's very expressive formulation: "Good men were supposed to be masculine, according to Medieval Roman ideals, and good women were supposed to be feminine."[6] The presence of strong women in written sources might have been the explanation of the image created in the mind of Western European intellectuals, starting with the 16th century, about Byzantium as a place were gender relations and identities were different, men being effeminate and women more masculine than their fellows in the West.[7] The reality could have been that of women holding more social and political power in Byzantium than in the Medieval West, as convincingly advocated by Judith Herrin.[8] It is also true that, even if discussions of masculinity and femininity permeate many Byzantine texts, it is unquestionable that most Byzantines valued quite the same cultural ideal of a "true" manliness as their Western counterparts.[9] For the people living in the Byzantine society, the generally accepted idea was that of separate feminine and masculine spheres, with limits that are difficult to surpass. The articles in this volume show that the limits of the separate spheres did exist, but they were permeable and the image of Byzantine women's lives and experiences can still be nuanced.

It is interesting to note that the overall image that results from the articles compiled in this collective work is sometimes very different that the one created through the more traditional analysis of texts and iconography pertaining to elite women. The narrative sources spoke of a society in which women were allowed to do little else excepting marrying (or alternately, entering a monastery), giving birth and raising children, and getting involved in domestic textile production. Some of them had political authority; and a

lesser number, moral and intellectual. Other kinds of textual sources show us women who owned and ran factories, mills, rural estates, and commercial enterprises, and who were important donors supporting the building of churches.

The main problem we see is that the great majority of Byzantine women were considered "silent," because they were not given voices in written sources. The authors of this volume intended to show that this kind of usually invisible and silent woman can be seen, and they speak to us though the objects they made, used and left behind. We have to say that some attempts to find these invisible women, who were not present in the written and usually not even in the iconographical sources, were made before, especially by authors using archaeological finds or material objects preserved in museums. As early as the 1990s, Roberta Gilchrist offered innovative insight into the relation between material culture and social construction of gender, using sources about Western (especially English) society, and the example she gave was seminal.[10] Ioli Kalavrezou used material evidence to illuminate the Byzantine women's life, in an exhibition which also occasioned a very useful catalogue.[11]

The authors of this volume, confronted with the necessary interrogation about where and how to find the non-elite women from the Byzantine society, were naturally inclined to take into consideration not only written and iconographical sources, but material ones too. The development of Material Culture Studies offers new and insightful avenues of approach. Once again, studies on material culture first began to occupy a special place in researches conducted on Antiquity and the Middle Ages in Western Europe. Interdisciplinary approaches made possible the modification of traditional paradigms used by archaeologists and historians, who are now interested in the *social life of things*, or in the *agency* which characterizes objects in any society.[12] The revival of concern with the materiality of social and cultural life was related with what was recently called "the Material Turn," which looks at the roles that objects play in human action, as well as at their significance. Many articles in this volume underline the importance of the Material Culture, whose study is dealing not merely with things, but with the meanings they hold for humans. The authors put forward the usage, consumption, creation, and trade of objects as well as the behaviours, norms and rituals that the objects imply. Archaeological material or different other kinds of artefacts are understood in relation to specific cultural and historic contexts, communities and belief systems. The study of Byzantine women is enriched by this renewed interest in objects and meaning and in the meaning of the objects, leading to the investigation of new (gender) perspectives.

The focus on women involved in economic activities opens the volume toward labour history, a field which is able to offer insightful perspectives on human activity even after the weakening of the Marxist meta-narrative that took place after the political changes started in 1989. Histories of beauty, physical appearance and adornment, placed in the social context of those

less privileged women, are other novelties the current approaches propose using an oxymoronic but suggestive concept of "modest vanity". Girls being girls, even the poorer ones, tended to find ways of adorning themselves with modest jewellery made from ordinary materials, using cosmetics and trying to be fashionable through their clothes which could be elegant while remaining simple. In a wider perspective, this can not only designate the "inner" need of women for the display of femininity by all–even humble–means; it can also be a way of communicating their social and economic status or even their ethnic and cultural identity, as investigated by the articles in Part I.

Another interest of the volume consists in opening new avenues of understanding the life of women in Late Antique, Byzantine and Post-Byzantine periods by placing them in a Braudelian *longue durée*, which is a better way to approach this issue, taking into consideration the fact that women's existence throughout history was often defined by different rhythms than that of men. This idea of different gendered temporalities was first expressed by one of the pioneers of Gender Studies, Joan Kelly (1928–1982), who asked in the 1970s a path-breaking question: "Did Women have a Renaissance?" putting the traditional schemes of periodization into perspective.[13] Her answer was a shocking "no," which came after a convincing demonstration that women's historical experience differs sometimes substantially from men's. To acknowledge the differences between the gendered experiences of individuals became a kind of norm. It was normal to address the same question to realities pertaining to other historical periods, as Julia M.H. Smith did, asking if women had a "transformation of the Roman World." She was using a concept which was then fashionable, but nonetheless showed that the historiographical innovation linked with the transition from the Roman World towards the medieval one still remained gender-blind.[14] Even if this could be seen as counter-intuitive, the chronology of a volume about Byzantine women's lives can begin with the Late Antique period and end almost in our days. This doesn't mean that changes did not occur, but in the way of living a woman's life, those occured more slowly in the Byzantine and post-Byzantine regions than in other European ones. Of course, things changed at different paces in different areas of women's life and activity, thus leading towards some tensions between modernity and tradition, that this volume seeks to present and explain.

Some decades after those pioneering works, the question of the specificities of Byzantine women's lives is still worth asking, even if the historiographical production on women history and gender history in the Eastern Roman Empire is becoming huge.[15] Thus, the present volume intended to offer new perspectives on old issues and also to present new or lesser known sources on Byzantine women's experiences, especially archaeological and iconographical ones. The articles edited by Sophia Germanidou further consider women's historical experiences according to texts and material culture, using paradigms that appear divergent, such as cultural

history, archaeology, ethnology, philosophy or natural sciences (physical anthropology), inevitably expanding beyond geographical and chronological limits. Cultural continuities or contradictions, transmission of traditional values and updated conservatism or establishment of new-fashioned labour, and living female realities may account for the least insight into the Post-Byzantine and pre-industrial communities – and the diversity of academic approaches.

The volume starts with the article written by Marina Vogkli and Stavroula Papanikolopoulou, *Women's accessories from a bath house on Santorini (Thira), Cyclades (2th–4th centuries)*, which analyses small objects made from bone used for cosmetics and daily life, found in a Late Roman villa. Despite their modest dimensions, the objects used for embellishment by the women on Santorini were imports, which confirm the status of secular women in this society during that transformation of the Roman world into the Early Byzantine one.

The next piece, written by Susanne Metaxas, *Unheard voices of Early Byzantine girlhood. On the custom of adorning secular girls with earrings as seen through the evidence of burials*, observes that modest jewels have been neglected by the archaeologists and art historians for a long time, before starting to interest them in the context of contemporary funerary archaeology. Suzanne Metaxas' paper addresses an issue still underrepresented in recent scholarship: the study of adornment practices related to young girls, especially earlobe piercings in order to wear earrings. Gender and age are combined in an analysis of material culture discovered through archaeology and discussed in its broader anthropological signification. The custom of piercing the earlobes of girls early in their lives is not documented in written texts, but parallels could be found in contemporary practices still used in the Balkans and Romania, where girls' earlobes are pierced soon after birth and the godparents give them their first pair of earrings at their baptism.

The same issue of modest jewels is addressed by Florentia Evangelatou-Notara and Kalliope Mavrommati in the article *Not even a band on my finger? Rings of non-elite women.* The authors question the information that can be offered by the rings made from ordinary metal, which were probably worn by persons of low status. Based on the archaeological context and some parallels that can be made with ethnographically documented practices, the authors suppose that these rings of non-precious metals (copper, bronze, iron) must have been pre-fabricated and sold at local festivals, inferring that these modest objects encapsulated larger social and cultural signification than their apparent lack of sophistication suggests.

In *Women and beekeeping – a forbidden liaison (?). Scattered evidence with emphasis on Christian era (Byzantine and Medieval culture)*, Sophia Germanidou uses source-pluralist methodology and interdisciplinary approaches, with a focus on the relatively newly emerging scientific field of cultural entomology, which has recognized the impact of insects on the history of civilization and underlined the meaning attached to bees, ants, and wasps

through history. In a world that created a lot of prescriptions justified by the need of a ritual purity which considered sexual relations and some physiological functions as polluting, beekeeping by women was forbidden, especially because of menstruation, which was seen as source of un-cleanliness. Scarce Byzantine evidence seems to point that this interdiction persisted in Eastern Christianity longer than in Western Christianity. Only in the 20th century, ethnographical documentation shows that the ancient practices began to fade and, eventually but not completely, to disappear.

Konstantina Gerolymou, in *Eve at the forge: Byzantine women and manual labour. Comments on a rare iconographical theme and its connection to reality*, puts two pieces of iconographic evidence of different types, provenances, and dates to use; related to depictions of scenes from the Old and New Testaments that show either Adam and Eve or a pair of artisans working in a forge. After the Fall, Adam and Eve were depicted working in the fields, but in some rare depictions, they are represented not as farmers, but as blacksmiths, especially in ivory carved images on caskets probably used to hold precious items. The author stressed that this kind of representation had a rather symbolic meaning, than depicting a reality of a hard and demanding manual work undertaken by women. She believes that there are some sources that suggest the possibility of women participating in "unfeminine" tasks, such as those specific to a smithy, because of their role in contributing to family businesses.

The position and importance of women within the family during the Late Byzantine period is questioned by Eleni Barmparitsa in *Female family status during the Late Byzantine period; evidence from MS Parisinus graecus 135.* The miniatures in a manuscript, which is an interesting hybrid of Byzantine and Western European cultural origins, illustrate the *Book of Job*. Faithful to Byzantine iconography's conventions, the images analysed in the article shed light on the multi-dimensional role of women in all aspects of life and their family. The normative character of prescriptions leading to the way of representing human figures in the Byzantine art does however allow reality of everyday life to be rendered to a certain extent through painted images. Under the biblical illustrations we can glimpse the iconography of the Byzantine family, which includes details that reveal the prevailing mentality regarding gendered roles of men and women. Although women's position is considered inferior and is depicted as such in the manuscript's illustrations, it is also profoundly complementary to that of men.

The article *Ordinary women in Byzantine funerary contexts from Greece; a view from the bones*, written by Paraskevi (Voula) Tritsaroli, uses bioarchaeology to tell a fascinating story about the lives, the daily chores and challenges of women from lower classes, which remain largely unknown in the light of written and even traditional archaeological sources. The author points out that the skeletal remains of past individuals offer much information about the people's behaviour during their lives and the way they were treated when dead. Much of women's life experiences that cannot be

reconstructed using traditional sources are 'written' in their bones and can be deciphered from their burials. Women's bones tell that they were less resilient than men against early mortality, despite their stronger immune response, but they also had a lower rate of violent death than men. The age-at-death was lower for females than for males, but paleo-dietary reconstruction does not suggest differential access to food commanded by gender. Also, the ideology of women's inferiority and the lack of equality in life is not reflected in funerary practices. "Women were equally treated in the mortuary sphere as integral parts of the community and of family groupings in prominent or less prominent areas of the Byzantine cemetery," said the author. Skeletal health indicators suggest more pronounced gender differences in urban lifestyles than in the countryside, and maybe unexpectedly tell us about women in rural areas being more stressed during growth, but enjoying more social equality with men than their urban fellows.

Nevena Dimitrova proposes a theoretical discussion on femininity in her article about *The 'transcendental' role of woman in Early Patristics (theological and philosophical insights).* She insists on the complementarity of men and women in the Byzantine world, where a woman's social role was to be simultaneously subordinated to men and also to lead the "spirit" of the family. The somewhat paradoxical image was further complicated when authors from the Late Byzantine period wrote about a kind of rebirth of women in the image of Holy Mother Mary.

Interpreting the Female Dances of "Ainoi" (Laudes) in the Post-Byzantine painting, written by Magdalini Parcharidou, analyses some frescoes that offer a rare representation of dancing women. The last three psalms of the *Psaltery* inspired paintings of male dancers, and usually only from the 16th century on ward, there are some depictions of dances performed by women in this religious context. The use of models taken from older artifacts is the rule, but the author questions if the frescoes can also offer ethnographical information about the real dances of the period in which they were painted. She thinks that murals offer "a realistic spectacle where the movements, the costumes, the jewellery and, generally, the iconography of the dancers reflect the perceptions and habits of their contemporaneous age."

Sofia Menenakou continues the discussion about later realities in her article *Illustrating the everyday life of women in Mani during the Post-Byzantine period. A small contribution to the subject*. She tries to decipher some aspects of the everyday life of Maniot women during the Post-Byzantine period, from 1460 to the beginning of the 19th century, using mural painting, dedicatory inscriptions, prayers/invocations/supplications, and architectural characteristics of churches dating from the 18th and 19th centuries. The author observed that the sources revealed women who "were dynamic and when circumstances demanded (widowing, warfare), they assumed leadership or engaged in fighting as the equal counterparts of men."

Women's work in pre-industrial rural Greece. An ethnographic point of view, written by Andromachi Economou, proposes an anthropological approach

of gender in relation to labour division. Her analysis shows the evolution of women's implication in economic activities in rural Greece, from the pre-industrial period until today. Women were involved in agriculture, resin collection, and the exploitation of forest resources such as charcoal and lime production, livestock farming, silkworm farming, silk production, textiles, cheese making, and other tasks and crafts. Despite their economic contribution, they formed, together with children, "a cheap, non-recognised, invisible, informal, albeit real and reliable labour force." Women's work was, and still is, labelled as lower, unskilled, cheap labour; socially underestimated and financially remunerated with lower wages. The situation changed in the last decades with the involvement of migrant workforce in agriculture, so women in the Greek rural areas turned to services, especially tourism, but "do not seem to be overturning radically and to their benefit this change of roles and status in the productive-manufacturing process, while they have almost totally 'disappeared' from the primary production process."

To conclude, we think that the multiplicity of points of views offered by the contributors to this volume can vastly benefit any scholar interested in Gender Studies, women's history and material culture of the Byzantine and Post-Byzantine period. The articles convincingly show how concepts like ideology, objects' agency, and social roles and statuses inform social and cultural definitions of femininity in Byzantium and beyond. They try to reveal how the women's identity was constructed with the help of images, objects and texts, and how the femininity defined during the Byzantine period showed an incredible force of continuity during the next centuries. The variety of sources and approaches constitutes the strength of a collective work that expands our horizons of knowledge about this fascinating area of civilization which was the Byzantine Empire. The Byzantine successor states and cultures were and are marked by its inheritance, in what Nicolae Iorga, a great Romanian historian from the 20th century, called *Byzance après Byzance*, that is *Byzantium after Byzantium*.

Notes

1 A. E. Laiou, *The Role of Women in Byzantine Society*, *Gender, Society, and Economic Life in Byzantium*, Variorum Collected Studies Series, Ashgate: Farnham 1992, 233–260. First published in *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* in 1981. L. James (ed.), *Women, Men, and Eunuchs: Gender in Byzantium*, Routledge: London 1997.

2 One of the most comprehensive databases on gender in Byzantium it the well known Dumbarton Oaks' one: https://www.doaks.org/research/byzantine/resources/gender-bibliography.

3 L. Garland (ed.), *Byzantine Women: Varieties of Experience, 800–1200*, Publications of the Centre for Hellenic Studies, King's College, Routledge: London 2006.

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15 See a recent survey on historiographical treatment of gender and women history in Byzantium in Neville's, *Byzantine Gender.* A more extended bibliographical list in B. Neil and L. Garland (eds), *Questions of Gender in Byzantine Society*, Routledge: London and New York 2016.

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Part I

Modest vanity, social identity

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1 Women's accessories from a bath house on Santorini (Thira), Cyclades (2th–4th centuries)[1]

Marina Vogkli and Stavroula Papanikolopoulou

A great part of a Roman villa rustica was discovered in a private plot, in Kamari, on Santorini island (old name Thira, ancient Oia, **Figure 1.1**), during a rescue excavation that was carried out between 1999 and 2002 by the Greek Archaeological Service.[2] The villa is situated south of the church of Saint George Thalassitis, in an area where the ruins of an Early Byzantine three-aisled basilica and of a large building dated to the Imperial period, were discovered. It lies 1 km far from the settlement of ancient Oia, one of the two ports of ancient Thira.

The so far excavated complex measures 37 × 21 m, occupying a surface of 520 m^2. The west part of the complex is not yet excavated; this is where the main entrance would be situated. A cobbled path (**Figure 1.2**) led to another entrance located approximately in the middle of the compound's east side.

The complex is divided into two compartments, the north and the south. These compartments are regular and symmetric; between them is a corridor running E-W (**Figures 1.3 and 1.4**). The north compartment (rooms I-IX, **Figures 1.2 and 1.5**) includes accommodation rooms, storerooms and industrial installations (wine press and vat), while the south compartment includes a bath.[3]

Almost at the centre of the north compartment, inside room V, a wine press and a vat are constructed (**Figures 1.2 and 1.6**). The wine press[4] is built above ground and has a shallow, rectangular tank; the walls and the treading floor of the tank are coated with hydraulic plaster; the floor has an inclination towards the built, underground vat[5] (**Figures 1.2 and 1.6**). At the north wall, there is a small, rectangular hole where the wooden beam of the large mechanical wine press would be adjusted.[6]

West (X), at the end of the corridor, there is a staircase of three steps leading to the first room, the bath (loutron) (**Figure 1.1**), the apodyterium (Ap) or vestibulum (**Figures 1.2 and 1.7**).[7]

The bath (21,68m × 11,00m)[8] belongs to the "single-axis row type"[9] and it occupies a surface of 230 m^2. It includes eight main rooms: an apodyteriun, a frigitarium for the cold bath, two tepidaria for the warm bath, three caldaria for the hot bath, two praefurnia, and three auxiliary room (**Figures 1.2 and 1.7**). West of the bath, part of a built rectangular structure

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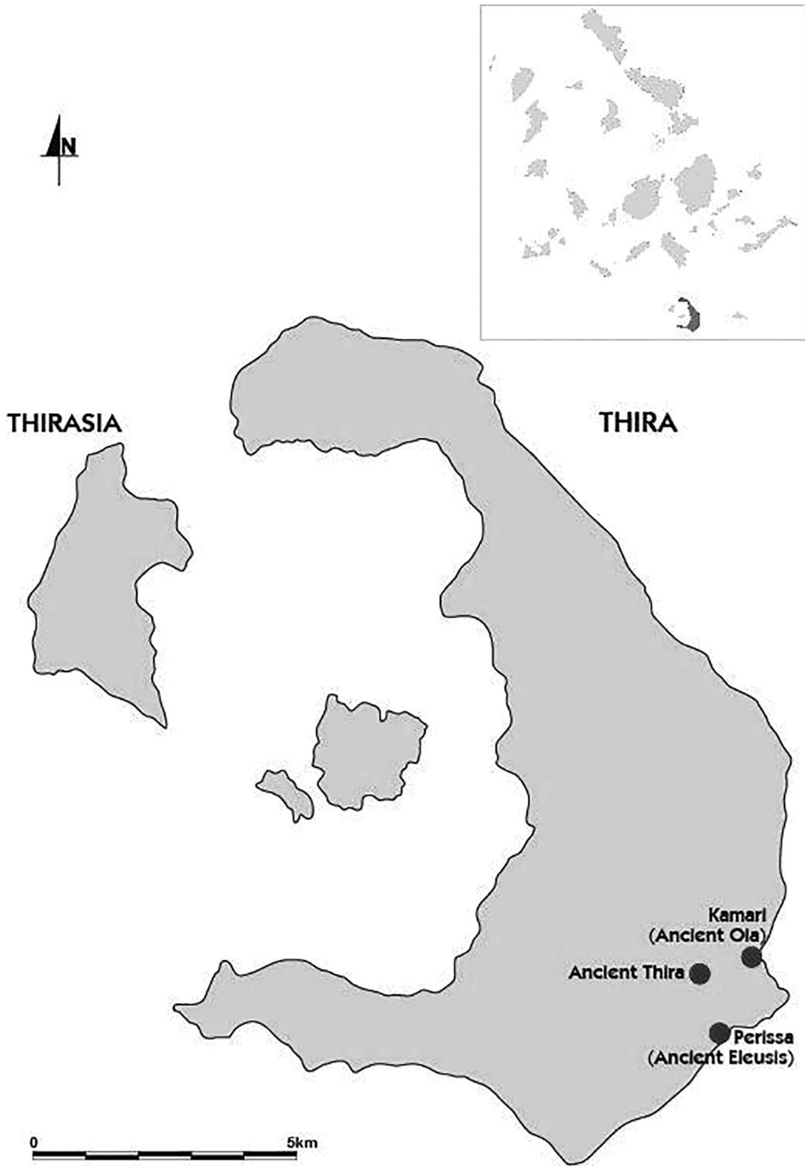

Figure 1.1 Map of Thira/ Cyclades (© authors).

was discovered; it was probably a heroon (a shrine dedicated to a hero) of uncertain date,[10] which was built to honour a family of physicians. Among the finds were four inscribed marble stones, a marble urn with an erased inscription and a conical lid, two fallen sculpted busts of men and a sculpted bust of a woman.

Figure 1.2 Ground plan of the bath house and the agricultural installation. Santorini (Thira), Kamari (©authors, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades).

The definition and dating of the complex's building phases is quite complicated, due to the consecutive reparations and alterations that took place. As no coins were found, any suggestion considering the time of its foundation and use is solely based on pottery. The pottery indicates that the bath

Figure 1.3 General view from the southwest of the bath house and the agricultural installation. Santorini (Thira), Kamari (©authors, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades).

Figure 1.4 Corridor from the east of the bath house and the agricultural installation. Santorini (Thira), Kamari (©authors, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades).

Figure 1.5 The wine press and storerooms of the bath house and the agricultural installation. Santorini (Thira), Kamari (©authors, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades).

Figure 1.6 View of the wine press from the southwest. Santorini (Thira), Kamari (©authors , Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades).

Figure 1.7 View of the bath house from the west. Santorini (Thira), Kamari (©authors, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades).

complex was in use from the 2nd until the 4th century AD. This is a period when the rich aristocrats of Thira offered their donations to the city and also a time when only a very small number of citizens possessed land.[11] Besides the large number of ceramics,[12] some significant minor objects made of bone were found; objects serving cosmetic and other everyday purposes. A small pyxis belongs to the first category, while a spoon and a stirring rod may be used not only as cosmetic devices, but also in other daily activities.

The small cylindrical bone pyxis is complete (h.: 4.5 cm, d.: 3.8 cm) (**Figures 1.8 and 1.9**). It has a cylindrical body, flaring towards the base; the upper part is recessed to receive the lid, while the deeper interior recess at the bottom is to receive the slightly concave base. The body of the pyxis is decorated with three concentric double lines, while the lid is decorated with two relief bands. The outer walls of the lid are decorated with relief bands; at the centre of the lid there is a conical knob surrounded by a small circle in relief.

The pyxis was found in room IV that is situated north of the wine press, at the complex's north compartment. Similar objects are dated between the 1st and the 4th century AD and they are discovered in numerous areas and sites of the Roman world, such as in Athens,[13] Corinth,[14] Nikopolis,[15] Pella,[16] Crete,[17] Naxos,[18] Cyprus,[19] the Balkans,[20] and so on.[21] They were made of wood, stone, or other more or less valuable materials, and they were used as

Figure 1.8 Vertical view of the pyxis from the bath house and the agricultural installation. Santorini (Thira), Kamari (©authors, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades).

Figure 1.9 Horizontal view of the pyxis from the bath house and the agricultural installation. Santorini (Thira), Kamari (©authors, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades).

Figure 1.10 Front side of the cochlear from the bath house and the agricultural installation. Santorini (Thira), Kamari (©authors, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades).

Figure 1.11 Back side of the cochlear from the bath house and the agricultural installation. Santorini (Thira), Kamari (©authors, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades).

containers of make-up powders. These cosmetic substances along with the perfumes that were kept in polychrome unguentaria are related to practices of beautification and improvement of a person's image.[22]

It is not always easy to suggest a particular function of a bone object. This is because such an object often served for various purposes. A spoon and a stirring rod belong to this ambiguous case. The spoon, also known as cochlear, was discovered south-east of the bath, not far from the auxiliary room AU III. It has a concave, almost circular bowl (d.: 2.7 cm) and a cylindrical handle (l.: 9.65 cm) (**Figures 1.10 and 1.11**). Notches decorate the junction point of the bowl and the handle.

The spoons differ on the basis of their size, shape and handle decoration.[23] There are two main spoon types:[24] the first type is known as *ligula*; it is characterised by an oval bowl and it was used for a variety of purposes.

The second type is known as *cochlear*; it is characterised by a small circular bowl and a long handle and it was used for eating, especially shellfish and eggs.[25] It was also used as a measuring spoon in the preparation of cosmetics, medicine, and perfumes.

Even though it was found in an auxiliary room/storeroom, this cochlear was most probably used in the preparation of cosmetics. This assumption is based on the lack of organic remains, such as shellfish or eggshells, in the respective archaeological context. Bone cochlears are rather common finds in contexts of the Roman and Byzantine times. Similar objects are found in Athens,[26] in Thessaloniki,[27] in Corinth,[28] in Delphi,[29] in Olympia,[30] in Atalanti,[31] in Chalkis,[32] in Thebes,[33] on Delos,[34] on Paros,[35] on Naxos,[36] on Crete,[37] in Thesprotia,[38] in Patras,[39] in ancient Demetrias,[40] in Kozani,[41] in the Balkans (Moesia),[42] in Israel,[43] and so on.[44]

Another object serving for various purposes is a partially preserved bone implement that was found in the praefurnium PrII (**Figure 1.12**). It has a shaft (l.: 8.10 cm) with one loop end. The section of the shaft is circular, while that of the loop is square. The shaft is decorated with two incised lines and spiral fluting; the loop is decorated with three incised lines.

Various functions are suggested in regard with this implement. Most researchers interpret it as a stirring rod: this object was used in the process of stirring and extracting perfume oils and fat from vases or boxes. It may have been used even as a tool to apply perfumes and oils on the body, or cosmetics, make-up, and powders on the face.[45] Only some researchers consider it as a spindle[46] or relate it to ritual practices.[47]

The shaft is usually decorated with notches, grooves, spiral fluting or grid: the top end is formed into a loop, a cone or a triangle with leaf- or geometric motifs. The bottom end is either plain or tooled into a globular knob, a female figure (often the goddess Aphrodite), or an animal, usually a bird.[48] These shafts were mainly made of wood, bone, and glass.[49] The stirring rod found in the bath is a simplified version of such objects. It shares common characteristics with similar finds from Naxos[50] and Moesia in the Balkans.[51]

It is not easy to identify four, undecorated, cylindrical fragments that were found in various parts of the bath. They may be fragments of fibulae (dress pins or brooches), sewing needles, cochlears, spatulas, or stirring rods. Nine loom weights and 14 spindle whorls that were found in the bath complex indicate that they are probably fragments of sewing needles;[52] as such, they may be related to textile work taking place in the bath.[53]

The bone objects described above can be dated between the 2nd and the 4th century AD. This wide chronological span is due to the fact that they were generally found in disturbed layers. In addition, the morphological evolution of bone objects is rather slow, so that it is not possible to define a more precise dating on the basis of published parallels. However, they may offer additional evidence about the social life of the inhabitants of Thira. Furthermore, they may provide information about the identity and

Figure 1.12 Bone tool section from the bath house and the agricultural installation. Santorini (Thira), Kamari (©authors, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades).

activities of the people visiting the bath. This is an important contribution given the limited thorough publications of bath complexes and the respective minor finds.

We believe that the pyxis, the cochlear, and the stirring rod are solid indications of the presence of women in the bath since they may be accessories connected with the face care, the hair style, the clothes, and shoe fashion.[54] The bathers used to bring with them the necessary equipment, as shown by parallel archaeological finds.[55] The makeup and cosmetics were made at home, using herbs and pigments extracted by minerals, grinded in small

marble mortaria. Cosmetics and jewels were kept in special boxes made of various materials and the perfumes were stirred in clay-, glass-, or alabaster bottles (unguentaria). Stirring rods and cochlears were used to measure the portion, stir and apply the desired substance.[56]

Bone or metal fibulae (dress pins or brooches) were used to fasten garments or as hair clips; metal mirrors somehow also "reflected" the vanity of women.[57] However, it should be noted that not only women used makeup and perfumes – men did so too,[58] since colour powders, cosmetics, and perfumes were signs of social status.[59] This is why it is generally difficult to associate objects to specific gender, unless they bear an inscription offering more precisions, or they are found in women's burials.[60] Likewise, the wall paintings decorating baths do not offer further information about this matter, as they rarely depicts bathers and related scenes.[61] However, in the case of the Thira bath, the presence of women is confirmed by the nine loom weights and the 14 spindle whorls, which are objects related to textile work,[62] as well as by the inscriptions of the heroon mentioning the names of two women related to medicine.[63]

The operation of baths from the Roman until the Byzantine times is also inferred by the textual evidence: the inscriptions, historical accounts and later on, texts of Church Fathers and other hagiographical sources.[64] In short, they provide evidence that baths occupied a significant role in the private and public life. They were the nucleus of the social interactions, as meeting points between people and groups that shared common ideas. Specifically, for women, going to the bath was one of their everyday activities, especially those from the upper class – it was actually one of their favourite ones.[65] It seems that they did not practice their personal care exclusively at home but they sought for social interaction in a common place, for covering not only their practical needs of hygiene but also of communication and interaction.

That may serve as another proof that women were not just in charge of the housekeeping and related activities; they often went out, except bathing, to participate in religious services or to attend music performances.[66] However, one should not deduce that Roman and, even more, Byzantine women were leaving their house frequently; even for bathing, they underwent restrictions. For example, in the *Life of Theophano*, one gets the information about how the father took his daughter to the bath, accompanied by servants. This was taking place at dusk or before dawn so as to avoid being seen by men, because there was no *balneum* under their possession.[67]

The bath occupies almost half of the complex's entire surface; this may mean that it was not used exclusively by the inhabitants of the villa rustica and hence, by the women who lived there. Even though the discovered bone objects imply the presence of women in the bath, this is not confirmed by the bath itself. If it was a public building, it was not used at the same time by both men and women.[68] It is possible that there were different opening hours, so that women did not visit the bath at the same time with men.[69] It

was in the morning that women were allowed to use it. According to textual evidence, the opening hours of baths did not change in the period since the 1st century BC until the 5th century AD. They remained the same even until the Byzantine times.[70]

To be more precise, the Roman baths opened at the eighth or the ninth hour – that is at 1:00pm or 2:00pm – and they closed at sunset.[71] The most appropriate time to use the bath was the eighth hour (at 2:00pm), when the water had the ideal temperature. When a bath was used by both men and women, it should be open also in the morning in order to be used by all.[72] According to Inge Nielsen, in case only one bath was in function, it was used by women from dusk (first hour) until the seventh hour; men used it later, from the eighth hour until the second hour of the night.[73] In winter the bath was open for women from 7:30am until 12:45pm and then for men from 12:45pm until 6:00pm. In summer women were allowed to use the baths from 4:30am until 1:15pm and men from 1:15pm until 10:00pm. When a bath was two-partite or mixed, it was open in the afternoon or earlier at noon, when necessary. Iconographic evidence shows that men usually took their bath naked and this is the reason why women were advised not to bathe at the same time with men.[74] While using the baths, women wore simple clothes to hide their nudity. They wore either a sort of bikini set known as *subligar* or a larger cloth known as *balnearis vestis*.[75]

The size and shape of the bath, the heroon and the wine production unit raise questions about whether the complex was public or private and this is a question impossible to answer with certainty. Information concerning the management of the bath is impossible to be provided by the archaeological research. Was this complex a possession of a rich landowner? Was it maybe the donation of a significant politician of the city, or was it the investment of a rich citizen who aimed to start a business after hiring a director? Was the complex taken over by a leaseholder?

It is possible to make only some suggestions based on certain historical facts. During the 2nd century AD, the local aristocracy played an important role in the public life of Thira. The aristocrats did not only occupy high ranks in the administration system, but they were also responsible of many significant public works. It is quite tempting to suggest that the large and elaborately decorated bath in Kamari of Thira could be linked with Titus Flavius Kleitosthenis Claudianus,[76] one of the richest persons of the time. According to an inscription in the Stoa Basileios (Royal Stoa) of ancient Thira, he took care of the baths on the ports of Thira.[77]

Despite the still unsolved questions, regarding the operation of the bath complex in Kamari, there is no doubt that it was one of the most significant and well preserved Roman structures in the Cyclades. Further investigation and study will shed more light to many aspects of everyday life in Thira. The bone objects that we discussed infer the presence of local women in the bath and allow various interpretations about their activities, their habits, their needs, their daily care and their role in the community.

Notes

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The initial presentation of the bath and the rural complex was given in May 2016, in the 3rd International Cycladological Conference that was held in Ermoupoli, on Syros; the Acts of this conference are under publication. Hopefully, the detailed and full publication of the complex will come after the completion of the study and will include a catalogue of all finds.

2 C. Pennas, Θήρα. Καμάρι. Οικόπεδο Ρ. Καίστελε και Μ.-Χ. Καραμολέγκου, *Archaiologikon Deltion* 54(1999), B2(2006), 840–841, figures 16–17, in *Archaiologikon Deltion* 55(2000), B2(2009), 1014–1015, figures 15–16 and in *Archaiologikon Deltion* 56–59(2001–2004), B6(2012), 193–194, drawing 1, plates 65–66. C. Pennas, 2nd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities. Thira, 2000–2010, M. Andreadaki-Vlazaki (ed.), *From the Excavation Work of the Ephorates of Antiquities*, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Tourism-General Directorate of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage: Athens 2012, 289–290, figures 6–9. The villa rustica extends westwards to the adjacent plot that is not excavated.

3 A wine press and bath facilities are excavated in the Early Byzantine bath at Patra: A. Lambropoulou - A. Moutzali, Early Byzantine Bath at Patra. Evidence for the Survival of the City in Dark Times, *Symmeikta* 16(2003–2004), 316 (in Greek, abstract in English), in a villa rustica at Paleokastro Oreokastro. E. Marki - S. Akrivopoulou, Excavation of a villa rustica in Paleokastro Oreokastro, *The Archeological Work in Macedonia and Thrace* 17(2003–2005), 283–298 (in Greek), and in a farmhouse in Chora of ancient Lefkada, G. Pliakou - V. Giza, A Roman Farmhouse at the Countryside of Ancient Leukais, A. Rizakis - I. Touratsoglou (eds), *Villae Rusticae: Family and Market–Oriented Farms in Greece under Roman Rule: Proceedings of an International Congress*, Meletemata 68, National Research Foundation-Institute of Historical Research: Athens 2013, 736–750 (in Greek, summary in English).

4 About the wine press: A. Gialouris, Agricultural - Craft Installation at the Site Ag. Dimitrios Kainourgiou N. Phiotida, *Archaeological Work of Thessaly and Central Greece* 2(2006), footnote 3, 1248, 1249–1250 (in Greek). P. Mayerson, The Meaning and Function of Lenos and Related Features in the Production of Wine, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 131(2000), 165.

5 Similar wine presses with built vats in: Veria in Chalkidiki, T. N. Pazaras, From Classical Brea to the Medieval Castle of Vrya. The Successive Building Phases as

evidenced by Written Sources and the Conclusions of Excavations to Date, *The Archeological Work in Macedonia and Thrace* 10A (1996), 320 (in Greek, summary in English). Th. Pazaras - C. Tsanana, Excavation at Veria of Nea Syllata (1991), *The Archeological Work in Macedonia and Thrace* 5(1994), 291, dr. 2, figures 3–4; Patras, M. Stauropoulou - M. Gatsi, Πάτρα. Περιφέρεια πόλης. Οδός Πέλοπος 90 – Εγκυκάδα, *Archaiologikon Deltion* 39(1984), Β΄, (1989), 90–92, dr. 7, plate 30c; Louloudies in Pieria, E. Marki, The Louloudies Excavation 1995, *The Archeological Work in Macedonia and Thrace* 9(1995), 196–197, dr. 1, figures 1–2, (in Greek, summary in English); Nea Kallikrateia in Chalkidiki, L. Toska - G. Xatzakis, Παλαιοχριστιανικές αρχαιότητες στη Ν. Καλλικράτεια Χαλκιδικής, *The Archeological Work in Macedonia and Thrace* 14(2000), 312, dr. 3, figure 1; and in a Roman villa rustica in Chora of ancient Leukas, Pliakou - Giza, A Roman farmhouse, 741–742 (in Greek, summary in English).

6 A similar wine press that is dated to a slightly later time is discovered on Delos. K. Raptis, *Early Christian and Byzantine Workshops in Greece*, MA thesis (in Greek), Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Faculty of Philosophy, School of History and Archaeology: Thessaloniki 2001, 120–121, dr. 67–69, including list of references.

7 D. Krencker and others, *Die trierer Kaiserthermen*, vols 1–2, B. Filser: Augsburg 1929, 185. I. Nielsen, *Thermae et balnea. The Architecture and Cultural History of Roman Public Baths*, vol. 1, Aarhus University Press: Aarhus 1993, 153.

8 The bibliography concerning bathhouses is extremely rich; only some references are cited here: Nielsen, *Thermae et balnea.* F. Yegül, *Bath and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, Architectural History Foundation – MIT Press: New York - Cambridge Massachusetts - London 1992. F. Yegül, *Bathing in the Roman World*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2010. J. DeLaine - D. E. Johnston (eds), Roman Baths and Bathing: Proceedings of the First International Conference on Roman Baths, Held at Bath, England. Part One: Bathing and Society, Supplement Series 37, *Journal of Roman Archaeology*: Portsmouth 1999. For the terms *thearmae* and *balaneia*, see Nielsen, *Thermae et balnea*, 111–114. Yegül, *Bath and Bathing*, 43. A. Vrouva, *The Roman baths of Greece*, MA thesis, University of Patras, Polytechnic School, Department of Civil Engineering: Patras 2005 (in Greek).

9 Krencker has divided the baths into specific types: Krencker and others, *Die trierer Kaiserthermen*, 177–181. Nielsen, *Thermae et balnea*, 4, 114.

10 The inscriptions are dated to the 1st century BC-1st century AD and the busts to the 2nd century AD. Issues, such as the character of the monument, its relation with the bath as well as the possible re-use of certain architectural elements coming from this monument will be discussed in the detailed publication of the complex.

11 P. M. Nigdelis, *State and Society of Cycladic Cities during the Hellenistic and Imperial Era*, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki: Thessaloniki 1990, 91–109 (in Greek, summary in English).

12 M. Vogkli - S. Papanikolopoulou, Bath and Agricultural Installation in Kamari of Thira, *Acts of the 3rd International Cycladological Conference,* forthcoming (in Greek, summary in English).

13 O. Alexandri, Κερατσινίου 54 και Πλάτωνος (οικόπεδον Ζορμπά), *Archaiologikon Deltion* 26 (1971), B1(1975), 115.

14 G. Davidson, *The Minor Objects,* Corinth XII, American School of Classical Studies at Athens: Princeton New Jersey 1952, 136, nr. 965, plate 69.

15 P. Vokotopoulos, Νομός Πρεβέζης, Νικόπολις. Ανασκαφαί, *Archaiologikon Deltion* 23(1968), B2(1969), 294.

16 P. Chrysostomou, ΙΖ Εφορεία Προϊστορικών και Κλασικών Αρχαιοτήτων. Πέλλα, Δυτικό Νεκροταφείο, *Archaiologikon Deltion* 61(2006), B2 (2014), 864, 868.

17 C. Davaras, A Roman cemetery at Hagios Nikolaos, *Archaiologiki Ephemeris* 1985–1987, 196, nr. 7310, plate 53c (in Greek, summary in English).

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21 Y. Farhi, Worked Bone Artifacts, D. Syon (ed.), *Gamla III: The Shmarya Gutmann Excavations 1976–1989. Finds and Studies, Part 2*, Israel Antiquities Authorities Reports 59: Jerusalem 2016, 252, nr. 123, figures 16.13, 123. E. Rodziewicz, *Bone and Ivory Carvings from Alexandria. French Excavations 1992–2004,* Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale: Cairo 2007, 160, nr. 264, plates 44.264, 108.4, nr. 265, plates 44.265, 108.3. S. Deschler-Erb, *Römische Beinartefakte aus Augusta Raurica. Rohmaterial, Technologie, Typologie und Chronologie*, Forschungen in Augst 27, Römermuseum August: August 1998, 179, nrs 4049, 4055, plate 44, nr. 4049, plate 45, nr. 4055. M. T. Bíró, *The Bone Objects of the Roman Collection in Hungarian National Museum*, Series Archaeologica II, Hungarian National Museum: Budapest 1994, 41, nrs 442–445, 97, nrs 442–445, plate LI, nrs 442–445. M. H. Rutschowscaya, *Catalogue des bois de l' Égypte copte*, Ministère de la culture, Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux: Paris 1986, 41, nr. 56.

22 D. Papanikola - Bakirtzi (ed.), *Daily Life in Byzantium*, Hellenic Ministry of Culture: Athens 2002, 378 (in Greek).

23 M. Vassiliadou, Οστέινα και ελεφαντοστέινα αντικείμενα από την Αρχαία Μεσσήνη: μια πρώτη παρουσίαση, E. Zymi - V. Karapanagiotou - M. Xanthopoulou (eds), *Archaeological Work in the Peloponnese 1, Proceedings of the International Conference*, University of the Peloponnese: Kalamata 2018, 501.

24 Davidson, *The Minor Objects*, 189. Bíró, *The Bone Objects*, 44 refers to four spoon-types: pear or pouch-shaped, spoon-shaped heads, drop- and circle-headed spoons with pointed end; N. Crummy, The Roman Small Finds from Excavations in Colchester 1971–1979, *Colchester Archaeological Reports* 2(1983), 69 discerns three spoon-types, which concern metal spoons only: spoons with a round bowl, with pear-shaped bowls, with a mandolin-shaped bowl.

25 The sharp end of the handle was used to remove the edible part from the shell. St. Eleftheratou (ed.), *Το Μουσείο και η Ανασκαφή: ευρήματα από τον χώρο ανέγερσης του νέου Μουσείου της Ακρόπολης*, Acropolis Museum: Athens 2006, 106. Davidson, *The Minor Objects*, 189.

26 Eleftheratou, *Το Μουσείο και η Ανασκαφή*, 130, nr. 382. Alexandri, Κερατσινίου 54 και Πλάτωνος, 117.

27 Papanikola - Bakirtzi, *Everyday Life*, 468, nrs 639, 640. A. N. Varvitsas, Αρχαιότητες και Μνημεία Κεντρικής Μακεδονίας. Κεντρική Μακεδονία, Θεσσαλονίκη, οδός Δ. Γούναρη, *Archaiologikon Deltion* 26(1971), B2(1975), 380. K. Soueref, ΙΣΤ΄ Εφορεία Προϊστορικών και Κλασικών Αρχαιοτήτων. Νομός Θεσσαλονίκης. Κάτω Τούμπα. Συμβολή των οδών Κίμωνος και Βαλτετσίου, *Archaiologikon Deltion* 53(1998), B2(2004), 567.

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30 C. Matzanas, Εφορεία Αρχαιοτήτων Ηλείας. Ολυμπία. Γυμνάσιο, *Archaiologikon Deltion* 70(2015) B1(2019), 290, figure 90.
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32 A. Sampson, Αρχαιότητες και μνημεία της Εύβοιας. Χαλκίδα, εργατικές κατοικίες (οικόπεδο Γιαμά), *Archaiologikon Deltion* 27(1972), B1(1976), 140.
33 E. Andrikou, Θ΄ Εφορεία Προϊστορικών και Κλασικών Αρχαιοτήτων. Οδός Πελοπίδου 26 (οικόπεδο κληρονόμων Νερούτσου - Κρητικού και Α. Παναγιωτίδη), *Archaiologikon Deltion* 50(1995), B1(2000), 287.
34 D. Waldemar, *Exploration archéologique de Délos. Le mobilier délien*, Boccard: Paris 1938, 228–230, plate LXXV, 603.
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2 Unheard voices of Early Byzantine girls. On the custom of adorning secular girls with earrings, as seen through the evidence of burials

Susanne Metaxas

According to written and pictorial sources[1] as well as from material evidence,[2] one of the most characteristic and popular items of Early Byzantine female attire were earrings. Unfortunately, our knowledge of earrings of that period is heavily restricted to those of aristocratic women, as only they are depicted in minor art, textiles, or mosaics. This is compounded by the fact that the majority of the published Early Byzantine earrings are of gold and precious metals. Since such objects, often lacking provenance,[3] constituted the starting point for research, jewellery studies naturally have focused on typology, chronology, and artistic quality, as well as on any relation such luxury items had with Constantinople and the women of either the Byzantine court or the upper classes – but not on secular females of middle and lower class. When earrings are found in archaeological excavations, they usually come from graves as remnants of the deceased's adornment or dress. Such finds were initially also treated as art objects, without reference either to skeletal remains (for example of an adult or a child, the number and placement of the objects), and with a preference for singling out and publishing earrings of precious materials, while those of cheaper materials belonging to ordinary women usually were overlooked.

The outcome of the all these circumstances is a gap in our knowledge of the Early Byzantine earrings of cheaper materials belonging to ordinary females.[4] This gap can be gradually filled only by the publications of such finds brought to light through a systematic funerary archaeology that examines graves as closed assemblages (grave type, bioarchaeological analysis of the skeletal remains, burial habits, the placement of personal objects on the skeleton), being all essential evidence for the examination of a deceased's social class, cultural identity, age, and sex.[5] A step in this direction is made by the present study, where ordinary earrings in the shape of simple hoops found in Early Byzantine infant graves are examined. Being pairs of earrings and moreover related to female infants, they open an entirely new avenue of research, giving the opportunity to focus on girls and not on women, as is usually the case.[6] Thus, it is possible to further highlight a so far unexplored aspect of Early Byzantine female adornment: the piercing and adorning of ears already from the very first years of life.

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Let us first have a look on the written and pictorial evidence for piercing girls' ears. Explicit reference for the adornment of girls' ears is to be found in the writings of the Early Church Fathers (2nd-4th centuries). Tertullian, for example, criticizes in his treatise *On the apparel of women* (II.10,1) the painful mutilation of girls' earlobes by piercing. This attitude is also witnessed in Clement of Alexandria's *The instructor* (II.12,129.2), where he warns against the piercing of children's earlobes for adornment; claiming it be an act against nature. John Chrysostom warmly advises parents in his instruction *On the vainglory and the Right Way for parents to bring up their children* (90.1058–1060) to keep daughters away from jewellery. About two centuries later (6th century), Pope Isidore of Seville highlights within the description of female jewellery in his *Etymologies* (XIX,31.10) an interesting detail: in *Graecia* there was the custom of adorning girls with pairs of earrings, while boys wore a single earring in the right ear, a valuable reference on which we will further expand.

Depictions of children are generally rare, with most of them being of boys,[7] while the monuments depicting girls with earrings are all related to the commemoration of elite girls. The majority are from the Roman and Late Roman periods with the most prominent being the Faiyum portraits (1st–2nd centuries) depicting girls with earrings and a necklace.[8] From the 2nd–3rd century, a reclining girl on a sarcophagus lid with a pierced ear[9] and girls on grave steles from Hungary can be cited.[10] In the Early Byzantine period we can refer to the fresco of the two-year old Nonnosa in the Christian catacombs of S. Gennaro in Naples,[11] as well as to the Virgin Mary as a child in Santa Maria Antiqua in Rome,[12] both wearing earrings and a necklace.

What about the material evidence? The material culture of children can be located almost exclusively in their graves, which they had reached usually after but a very brief duration of life.[13] As the sex of subadults cannot be determined through their skeletal remains,[14] jewellery and dress accessories constitute the most important objects in the examination of infant burials of the Late Roman and Early Byzantine period, as they are indicators of gender:[15] a single earring or a belt buckle are characteristic features of boys, while pairs of earrings and necklaces are characteristic of girls.[16]

Unfortunately, since systematic Byzantine funerary archaeology is still in its early stages, published earrings from Early Byzantine graves that can be attributed to girls still remain very scarce.[17] Here, pairs of earrings that come from five infant graves of the 6th–7th century at three sites in the Peloponnese, southern Greece[18]–Argos, Pallantion and Olympia –will be presented (**Figure 2.1**). In these graves, adapted to the young age of the deceased with a maximum size of about 80–110 cm, pairs of earrings were found beside the skulls. This allows one to identify the deceased as girls and to further document the practice of piercing and adorning the ears of female infants very early on in life.

Argos, situated in the north-east Peloponnese (see **Figure 2.1**), was a prosperous city during the Early Byzantine period (5th–7th centuries) as

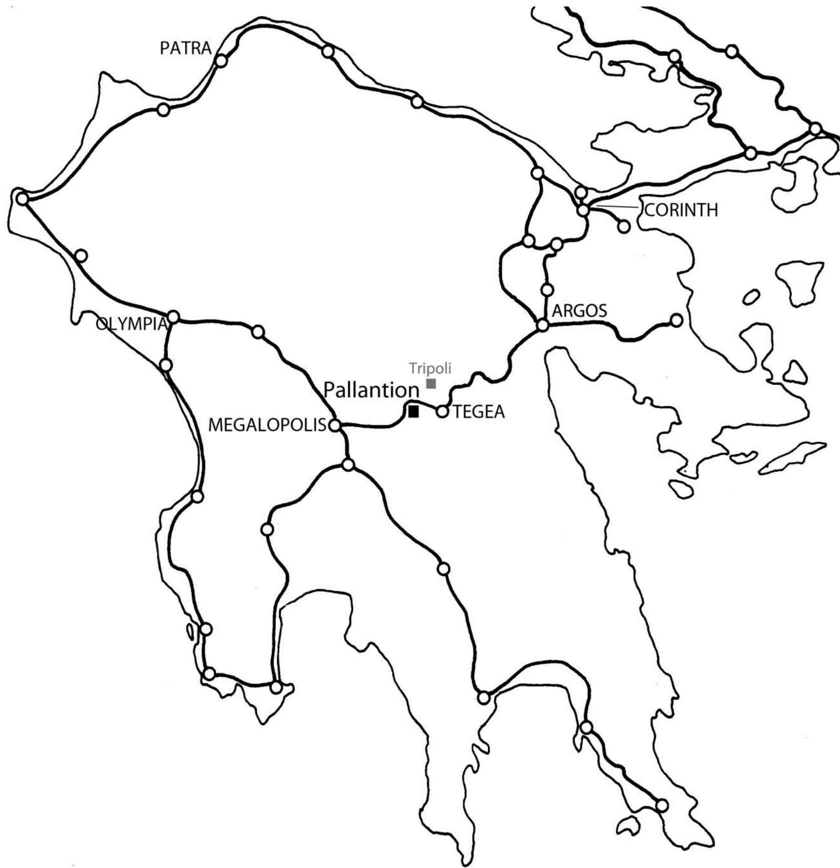

Figure 2.1 Map of the Early Byzantine Peloponnese, southern Greece, with indication of the sites with the infant graves under examination (after Metaxas – Tritsaroli, Gathering the Very Young, 160, plate 1a).

revealed through its archaeological remains.[19] An important site there of that period is the Northern cemetery, being the city's main *extra muros* burial ground, situated on the ancient road to Corinth, the capital of the province of Achaia.[20] The recent study of the jewellery and dress accessories found in this cemetery provided interesting details about burial practices, the social stratification of Argos but also on dress habits and especially on earrings. First of all, it was noticeable that earrings constituted the most frequent of all personal objects occurring in all types of graves (cist graves, tile graves), and represented many types of earrings of cheaper materials hitherto unremarked.[21] For earrings found in cist graves of a standard size, consecutive burials and relocation of the bones mean that information for their original placing within the grave and with what skeleton were

not available. In contrast, in three small tile graves made of Laconian roof tiles,[22] not re-opened for further burials and so containing the skeletal remains of one infant only, pairs of earrings of copper and silver alloy in the shape of hoops were found beside the skulls (**Figures 2.2–2.4**).[23] The ageing of the infants was attempted on the basis of the grave's length of about 80–100 cm, suitable for infants aged up to three years.[24] As sexing would not have been possible anyway for this age group on the basis of skeletal remains,[25] these infants could be identified as girls on the basis of the existence of pairs of earrings.

Near the Early Byzantine city of Tegea in the centre of the Peloponnese (see **Figure 2.1**) lies the settlement of Pallantion. This ancient village survived until the 6th–7th century as is known from an Early Byzantine church, lamps and coin finds.[26] In 2009, during rescue excavations, Early Byzantine graves were located in Pallantion for the first time.[27] Next to the ruins of houses, three child burials were unearthed, two tiny tile graves made of Laconian roof tiles and one grave in the shape of a box made of 14 rectangular floor tiles. This last grave had a length of 110 cm and contained, according to osteological analysis, skeletal remains of five individuals aged between one to five years.[28] Since sexing for these age groups was again not attempted,

Figure 2.2 Pair of earrings of copper alloy 1:1. Argos, Northern cemetery, Denezi-Tentzeri plot, tile grave 14 (©Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Ephorate of Antiquities of Argolis).

Figure 2.3 Pair of earrings of copper alloy, silvered 1:1. Argos, Northern cemetery, Dedoussi - Kirsanof - Karakitsou - Kotronaki plot, tile grave 6 (©Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Ephorate of Antiquities of Argolis).

Figure 2.4 Pair of earrings with pendants of silver 1:1. Argos, Northern cemetery, Rendas plot, tile grave 62 (©Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Ephorate of Antiquities of Argolis).

Figure 2.5 a, b Pair of earrings of silver alloy 1:1 Pallantion, Bataki field, grave 1 (©Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Ephorate of Antiquities of Arcadia).

two of the five individuals could be identified by the personal objects lying in situ: a boy aged three to five years on the basis of a belt buckle found on the pelvis, and a girl aged one and a half to five years on the basis of a pair of silver earrings in the shape of a hoop, identical to those found in Argos, beside her skull (**Figures 2.5a and 2.5b**).

After the decline of the major religious sanctuary of Antiquity in Olympia, situated in the north-west Peloponnese (see **Figure 2.1**), an Early Byzantine settlement was established amidst the ancient structures dating between the 5th–7th centuries.[29] To this settlement belonged approximately 400 graves, the assemblages of which were reconstructed and published recently with a focus on Early Byzantine Olympia.[30] From one of the identifiable infant graves, Grave 313, comes a pair of silver earrings that is identical to the findings from Argos and Pallantion (**Figures 2.6a and 2.6b**),[31] representing the main earring type of that period in Olympia.[32]

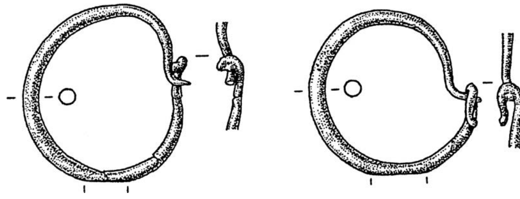

Figure 2.6 a, b Pair of earrings of silver 1:1. Olympia, Odeion, grave 313 (after Völling – Rettner, Frühbyzantinische Grabfunde, 115 plate 21).

The earrings found in Argos, Pallantion and Olympia, worn by girls, are all essentially of the same type:[33] it consists of a plain hoop with an approximate diameter of 1.9–2.5 cm, made of a wire of copper or silver alloy with a round cross section (0.2–0.4 cm wide), slightly thickened in the centre and undecorated (see **Figures 2.2, 2.3, 2.5a and 2.5b**). They could be equipped with moveable pendants (see **Figure 2.4**) or with soldered hoops on the lower part for mounting pendants (see **Figures 2.6a and 2.6b**). This earring type has furthermore a very characteristic closure: the hoop tapers at one terminal, forming a hook, while at the other end it is bent back to form an omega-like eyelet;[34] after threading the earring through the infant's pierced earlobe, it was fixed by the hook being inserted into the eyelet, so preventing the whole from falling off. Recent research on this still scarcely published earring type revealed a high distribution in Greece,[35] followed by Italy and Sicily,[36] and with only occasional finding so far in Turkey.[37] The high numbers of this earring type in Argos and Olympia further reflect that we have to do with one of the most popular Early Byzantine earrings in the Peloponnese, attributable to middle and lower class-persons and possibly being a cheaper version of golden specimens.[38] Furthermore, we cannot exclude a possible relation of this earring type to children; it is worth mentioning that in Argos so far no tile graves of adults contained such earrings – only those of infants.

Considering the young age of the girls that is approximately up to five years, this raises the question what the reason for piercing ears so early in life and meaning of earrings was. First of all, as the written sources generally bear witness to the piercing of infants' ears and the parental practice of adorning their offspring with jewellery,[39] we propose that the earrings found in the graves are not related to any funerary customs,[40] but were worn in their lifetime and not removed at the burial. This is corroborated by Isiodore's account that gives a picture of everyday customs for the period examined here. What we do not know – as no references in the written sources are to be found so far – is if the practice of piercing the earlobes and putting

on the earrings was related to a specific event in Early Byzantine girlhood; within the age range mentioned possible events could be birth, 40th day, Baptism, teething or weaning.[41] In search of the meaning of earrings, it is very reasonable that earrings could have had an amuletic function, like many other objects that infants were adorned with in order to protect them from all the evil influences[42] that were thought to be responsible for the high infant mortality, as most children did not reach the age of five.[43] Taking once more Isidore of Seville's account in his *Etymologies* literally, that there was a difference in the number of earrings worn by boys and girls, we propose, in closing, that a pair of earrings probably also functioned as female gender markers. If one imagines the uniform clothing in vogue for infants of both sexes – firstly, wrapped in swaddling clothes[44] and afterwards, dressed with a tunica[45] – a pair of earrings, *par excellence* female attire, could indeed help to immediately distinguish a girl from a boy.[46] Finally, it needs to be emphasized, that all the slender archaeological evidence confirms boys wearing a single earring.[47]

On the basis of pairs of earrings found in infant graves from three sites in the Peloponnese, an unknown aspect of Early Byzantine girlhood could be highlighted: the piercing and adorning of the ears of female infants with simple hoop earrings from very early on in life. It remains for funerary archaeology to further document this aspect of Early Byzantine girlhood through its findings, as it is vital for tracing customs of dress and attire related to gender and age and giving thus a voice to the ordinary girls of the Early Byzantine society, that are neither depicted in art nor mentioned in the written sources and for whom childhood ended so very quickly.

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2 The only comprehensive study on earrings of the Early Byzantine period (4th–7th centuries) is I. Baldini Lippolis, *L'oreficeria nell' impero di Constantinopoli tra IV e VII secolo*, Biblioteca Archeologica 7 – Edipuglia: Bari 1999, 67–112, where more than 230 objects (pairs and singular specimens) are collected. Earrings constitute the largest category of the female jewellery examined.

3 See the index of museums and collections in Baldini Lippolis, *L'oreficeria*, 257–265. An exception must be made for the jewellery of Sicily, being almost entirely from excavations. On the flourishing Antiquities trade of Istanbul (Grand Bazaar), where most of this jewellery was acquired and on the background of private collections, see K. Horst, Die Sammlung frühchristlicher und byzantinischer Objekte des Badischen Landesmuseums Karlsruhe – Die Geschichte der Sammlung und ihre Sammler, F. Daim and others (eds), *Spätantike und Byzanz. Bestandskatalog Badisches Landesmuseum Karlsruhe. Objekte aus Bein, Elfenbein, Glas, Keramik, Metall und Stein*, Byzanz zwischen Orient und Okzident 8.1, Schnell & Steiner: Mainz 2017, 9–15.

4 A.-M. Manière-Lévêque, L' évolution des bijoux 'aristocratique' féminins à travers les trésoirs proto-byzantins d'orfèvrerie, *Revue archéologique* 1(1997), 97–106. E. Kypraiou (ed.), *Greek Jewellery. 6000 Years of Tradition,* Hellenic Ministry of Culture: Athens 1997, catalogue nrs 76–77, 190–191, 198, 207, 213, 214–215. L. Wamser (ed.), *Die Welt von Byzanz – Europas östliches Erbe. Glanz, Krisen und Fortleben einertausendjährigen Kultur*, Theiss: Stuttgart 2004, 320–323 catalogue nrs. 604–620. A. Walker, Enhancing the Body, Neglecting the Soul? I. Kalavrezou (ed.), *Byzantine Women and Their World*, Yale Universtiy Press: New Haven – London 2003, 244–148.

5 Grave assemblages often are reconstructed afterwards, see for example C. Katsougiannopoulou, Einige Überlegungen zum byzantinischen Friedhof in Tigani auf dem Peloponnes, E. Pohl – E. Recker – C. Theune (eds), *Archäologisches Zellwerk. Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte in Europa und Asien. Festschrift für Helmuth Roth zum 60. Geburtstag*, Internationale Archäologie 16, M. Leidorf: Rahden 2001, 465–467. S. Metaxas, Schmuck und Kleidungszubehör aus der frühbyzantinischen Nordnekropole von Argos, *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz* 62(2015[2020]), 409–414. T. Völling – A. Rettner, Die frühbyzantinischen Grabfunde aus Olympia, T. Völling (ed.), *Olympia in frühbyzantinischer Zeit. Siedlung – Landwirtschaftliches Gerät – Grabfunde – Spolienmauer*, Olympische Forschungen 34, L. Reichert: Wiesbaden 2018, 47–118.

6 Research on girls of Antiquity and Byzantium is still in its infancy. A first step in this direction is S. Moraw – A. Kieburg (eds), *Mädchen im Altertum/Girls in Antiquity,* Frauen – Forschung – Archäologie 11, Waxmann: Münster – New York 2014. For the Roman period see K. Olson, The Appearance of the Young Roman Girl, J. Edmondson – A. Keith (eds), *Roman Dress and the Fabric of Roman Culture*, University of Toronto Press: Toronto – Buffalo – London 2008, 139–157.

7 See in general C. Hennessy, *Images of Children in Byzantium*, Routledge: New York 2008. A.-M. Behling, *Kinderdarstellungen in der Spätantike und im frühen Christentum. Untersuchungen der Bildtypen, ihrer Entwicklung und Verwendung*, Phoibos: Vienna 2016.

8 E. Doxiadis, *Portaits du Fayum. Visages de l' Égypte ancienne*, Gallimard: Singapure 1995, 64 nr. 50, 102 nr. 44, 120 nr. 93, 136-137 nrs 66–68, 150 nr. 91.

9 J. Frel, *Roman Portraits in the Getty Museum*, Philbrook Art Center: Tulsa 1981, 64–50 catalogue nr. 50 (the girl's left ear is pierced for the attachment of an earring. The right ear is un-pierced as it was not visible to the observer).

10 G. Erdélyi, Katalog der Steindenkmäler, L. Barkóczi and others (eds), *Intercisa I. (Dunapentele – Stálinváros). Geschichte der Stadt in der Römerzeit*, Archaeologia Hungarica 33, Akadémiai Kiadó: Budapest 1954, 290, plate XXXIX, 1, nr. 74, 295, XLIII, 6, nr. 109. A. Fascády, Earrings on Stone Monuments, C. Franek and others (eds), *Thiasos. Festschrift für Erwin Pochmarski zum 65. Geburtstag,* Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Archäologie der Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz 10, Phoibos: Wien 2008, 229–242.

11 Behling, *Kinderdarstellungen*, 49 plate 16. S. Moraw, Nonnosa und ihre Identitäten: ein spätantikes Fallbeispiel aus der Katakombe S. Gennaro in Neapel, *Archäologische Informationen* 41(2018), 155–169.

12 M. Andaloro – G. Bordi – G. Morganti (eds), *Santa Maria Antiqua tra Roma e Bisanzio. Roma, basilica di Santa Maria Antiqua al Foro romano, Rampa imperial*, Electa: Milano 2016, 185 figure 3.

13 A.-M. Talbot, The Death and Commemoration of Byzantine Children, A. Papaconstantinou – A.-M. Talbot (eds), *Becoming Byzantine. Children and Childhood in Byzantium*, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection: Washington D. C. 2009, 283–308. C. Bourbou, Infant Mortality: The Complexity of It All!, *Eulimene* II(2001), 187–203. P. Tritsaroli – F. Valentin, Byzantine Burials Practices for Children, F. Gusi Jener – S. Muriel – C. Olaria (eds), *Nasciturus, infans, puerulus vobis mater terra: la muerte en la infancia*, Serie de Prehistoria y Arqueología, Servicio de Publicaciones Diputación de Castellón: Castelló 2008, 93–113. C. Bourbou, Hide and Seek: The Bioarchaeology of Byzantine Children, E. Sioumpara – K. Psaroudakis (eds), *THEMELION. 24 Papers in Honor of Professor Petros Themelis from his Students and Colleagues*, Society of Messenian Archaeological Studies: Athens 2013, 465–483.

14 J. Buckberry, Techniques for Identifying the Age and Sex of Children at Death, S. Crawford – D. M. Hadley – G. Shepherd (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Childhood*, Oxford University Press: Oxford 2018, 65–66.

15 M. Parani, Defining Personal Space: Dress and Dress Accessories in Late Antiquity, L. Lavan – E. Swift – T. Putzeys (eds), *Objects in Context, Objects in Use. Material Spatiality in Late Antiquity*, Brill: Leiden – Boston 2007, 497–529. E. Marki, Dress in the Early Christian Art of Thessaloniki, *Deltion of Christian Archaeological Society* 30(2009), 293–300 (in Greek, abstract in English).

16 B. Pitarakis, The Material Culture of Childhood in Byzantium, Papaconstantinou – Talbot, *Becoming Byzantine*, 202–203. For a boy's belt buckle see S. Metaxas – P. Tritsaroli, Gathering the Very Young. A Contribution to Early Byzantine Burial Practices Based on the Contextual Analysis of a Children's Grave Found in Ancient Pallantion (Arcadia, GR), *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 67(2017), 151–152, 164 plate 5b. For single earrings found in graves related to boys see Metaxas, Schmuck und Kleidungszubehör, 388–389, 405–406.

17 See for example M. S. Arena – M. Andaloro (eds), *Roma Dall'Antichità al Medioevo. Archeologia e Storia nel Museo Nazionale Romano Crypta Balbi*, Electa: Milano 2001, 231–233.

18 The Peloponnese largely coincides with the Early Byzantine province Achaia/ Hellas, see D. P. Drakoulis, Cities, Towns and Villages in the *Hellas* Province during the Early Byzantine Period (4th–6th Centuries), *Byzantiaka* 28(2009), 39–102, and in particular 72–75 and 79 for Argos (Argolis), Pallantion (Arcadia) and Olympia (Elis) (in Greek, abstract in English). For the major roads of the Early Byzantine Peloponnese, see G. D. R. Sanders – I. K. Whitbread, Central

Places and Major Roads in the Peloponnese, *The Annual of the British Studies at Athens* 85(1990), 339 figure 2, on which the map of this paper (**Figure 2.1**) is based.

19 On Early Byzantine Argos and its archaeological remains, see V. Konti, Contribution à l' étude de la géographie historique de l' Argolide, *Symmeikta* 5(1983), 175–181 (in Greek, abstract in French). A. Oikonomou-Laniado, *Argos paléochrétienne. Contribution à l'étude du Péloponnèse Byzantin*, BAR International Series 1173: Oxford 2003. C. Abadie-Reynal, Argos from the Fourth to the Eighth Centuries, J. Albani – E. Chalkia (eds), *Heaven and Earth. Cities and Countryside in Byzantine Greece*, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports-Benaki Museum: Athens 2013, 211–215. D. Athanasoulis – A. Vassiliou (eds), *Byzantine Museum of Argolis. Catalogue of the Permanent Exhibition*, Hellenic Ministry of Culture: Athens 2016, 29–77.

20 For this cemetery that lies under the modern city and has been brought to light through rescue excavations since the 1970s, see Oikonomou-Laniado, *Argos paléochrétienne*, 27–34. A. Vassiliou, Burial Topography and Funerary Practices in Early Byzantine Argos: Evidence from the North Cemetery, *Archaeological Work in the Peloponnese 2, Proceedings of the International Conference*, University of the Peloponnese: Kalamata 1–4 November 2017, forthcoming.

21 S. Metaxas, Jewellery and Dress Accessories from the Early Byzantine North Cemetery in Argos, *35th Annual Symposium on Byzantine and post-Byzantine Archaeology and Art*, Christian Archaeological Society: Athens 2015, 76–77 (in Greek). Metaxas, Schmuck und Kleidungszubehör, 384–392.

22 The deceased (usually one person) was covered with two or four tiles leant against one another. On this grave type, see C. Roebuck, *The Asklepieion and Lerna*, Corinth XIV – American School of Classical Studies at Athens: Princeton – New Jersey 1951, 162–163. N. Laskaris, *Monuments funéraires paléochrétiens (et byzantins) de Grèce*, Les Éditions Historique de Stephanos D. Basilopoulos: Athens 2000, 303–304. There is so far no comprehensive study, although it seems to represent one of the most abundant grave types of 6th–7th centuries, see Metaxas, Schmuck und Kleidungszubehör, 384–386.

23 **Figure 2.2:** Metaxas, Schmuck und Kleidungszubehör, 388 figure 10.1 (catalogue nr. 45). Metaxas – Tritsaroli, Gathering the Very Young, 165 plate 6c. – **Figure 2.3:** Metaxas, Schmuck und Kleidungszubehör, 388 figure 10.2 (catalogue nr. 49). Metaxas – Tritsaroli, Gathering the Very Young, 165 plate 6d. – **Figure 2.4:** Metaxas, Schmuck und Kleidungszubehör, 389–390 figure 12 (catalogue nr. 44). Athanasoulis –Vassiliou, *Byzantine Museum of Argolis*, 193, nr. 284. I owe many thanks to Dr. Georgios Tsekes, Dr. Eleni Sarri and Konstantinos Boundouris, Ephorate of Antiquities of Argolis, for allowing me to study the finds from the excavations they conducted and for providing me with archaeological information from the notebooks, as well as excavation plans.

24 This information was kindly provided to me by Dr. Paraskevi Tritsaroli on the basis of her studies on Byzantine cemeteries. See also J. Dresken-Weiland, *Sarkophagbestattungen des 4.-6. Jahrhunderts im Westen des Römischen Reiches*, Supplementband der Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte 55, Herder: Rom – Wien – Freiburg 2003, 25 with footnote 52 where ageing is attempted on the basis of the sarcophagus' size.

25 M. Lewis, *The Bioarchaeology of Children: Perspectives from Biological and Forensic Anthropology*, Cambridge Studies in Biological and Evolutionary Anthropology, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2007. Buckberry, Techniques for Identifying.

26 On Early Byzantine Pallantion, see Konti, Contribution à l' étude, 115. For the Early Byzantine remains brought to light through the excavations of the Italian School of Archaeology in Athens, see G. Libertini, Scavi in Arcadia (Agosto-Settembre 1940), *Annuario della Scuola Archeologica di Atene e delle missioni italiane in Oriente* 1-2(1939–1940), 225–230. G. Libertini, Chiese bizantine nel-l'area dell'antica Pallanzio, S. Kyriakidou – A. Xyngopoulou – P. Zeppou (eds), *Acts of the 9th International Congress of Byzantine Studies*, vol. A, Society for Macedonian Studies: Athens 1955, 250–256.

27 D. Athanasoulis – A. Vassiliou, Αρχαίο Παλλάντιο, θέση Μπατάκι, *Archaiologikon Deltion* 64, B1(2009), 309–311. S. Metaxas, Νέα αρχαιολογικά στοιχεία για την οικιστική δραστηριότητα στο Παλλάντιο στην πρωτοβυζαντινή εποχή, E. Zymi – A. Karapanagiotou – M. Xanthopoulou (eds), *Archaeological Work* in the *Peloponnese 1. Proceedings of the International Conference*, University of the Peloponnese: Kalamata 2018, 689–700.

28 Metaxas – Tritsaroli, Gathering the Very Young.

29 T. Völling – S. Ladstätter, Olympia in der Spätantike, Völling, *Olympia in frühbyzantinischer Zeit*, 6–14.

30 Völling – Rettner, Frühbyzantinische Grabfunde, 47–118.

31 Völling – Rettner, Frühbyzantinische Grabfunde, 91, 115 (Grab 313).

32 E. Curtius – F. Adler (eds), *Olympia. Die Ergebnisse der von dem Deutschen Reich veranstalteten Ausgrabung IV*, Asher & Co: Berlin 1890, 209, plate LXXI, nr. 1343 (a single silver earring). H. Philipp, *Bronzeschmuck aus Olympia*, de Gruyter: Berlin 1981, 135, nrs 488–490, plate 7, nr. 488, plate 41, nrs 488–489. T. Völling, The Last Christian Greeks and the First Pagan Slavs, E. Kountoura-Galaki (ed.), *The Dark Centuries of Byzantium (7th–9th Centuries),* National Hellenic Research Foundation-Institute for *Byzantine* Research: Athens 2001, 308, 319 figure 4. A. Rettner, *Grabfunde aus Olympia*, Wamser, *Die Welt von Byzanz*, 2004, 381, catalogue nr. 876.

33 An extended study on this type is given by Metaxas, Schmuck und Kleidungszubehör, 387–389.

34 This characteristic method of closure has so far not been singled out, but it seems to reflect a distinctive feature of earrings of the 6th–7th century, see for example A. Yeroulanou, *Diatrita. Gold Pierced-Work Jewellery From the 3rd to the 7th Century*, Benaki Museum: Athens 1999, 281 catalogue nr. 491, 284 catalogue nr. 511.

35 For other finds in Greece, apart from Argos, Pallantion and Olympia, see K. Chamilaki, Late Roman Burials from a Cemetery at Delion, Boeotia. Preliminary Remarks, D. Papanikola-Bakirtzi – D. Koussoulakou (eds), *Pottery of Late Antiquity from Greek Territory (3rd–7th century AD), Scientific Meeting,* vol. 2, Publications of the *Archaeological Institute of Macedonian and Thracian* Studies 8: Thessaloniki 2010, 580–609, 607, figure 3 (in Greek, abstract in English). D. Makropoulou*, Graves and Burials from the Western Cemetery in Thessaloniki (Second Half 3rd Century – 6th Century AD)*, PhD thesis University of Athens: Athens 2007, plate 32, item nr. BKo 269/2 (in Greek, online access). S. Miller, Excavations at Nemea 1979, *Hesperia* 49(1980), plate 43a GJ35. H. W. Catling and others, An Early Christian Osteotheke at Knossos, *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 71(1976), 35 B.3.

36 Orsi, Necropoli dei bassi tempi, 348, figure 15A. A. Luttazzi, Materiali tardoantichi e altomedievali conservati nella Biblioteca Giovardiana di Veroli (Frosinone), *Archeologia Medievale* 19(1992), 770 figure 2.4, 773–774 with further bibliography.

37 A. M. Pülz, *Byzantinische Kleinfunde aus Ephesos*, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften: Wien 2020, Volume I, 60–61 (S2), Volume II, plate 13, colour plate 11 (S2).

38 D. Papanikola-Bakirtzi (ed.), *Byzantine Hours. Works and Days in Byzantium. Everyday Life in Byzantium*, Hellenic Ministry of Culture: Athens 2002, 426 catalogue nrs 546–547 (simple golden hoops from Porto Rafti, Attica, with the characteristic eyelet). 585 catalogue nr. 832 (golden earrings with massive pendants found in the grave of a girl in Stamata, Attica).

39 The adorning of female infants is attested throughout the Byzantine period, see in general Pitarakis, Material Culture, 187–188. For archaeological finds of later periods, see for example E. A. Ivison, Funerary Archaeology, P. Niewöhner (ed.), *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia: From the End of Late Antiquity until the Coming of the Turks*, Oxford University Press: Oxford 2017, 18–20, figure 12.9.

40 Talbot, Death and Commemoration, 298–299.

41 For the life stages of childhood of Roman times, see M. Carroll, Archaeological and Epigraphic Evidence for Infancy in the Roman World, Crawford – Hadley – Shepherd, *Archaeology of Childhood*, 151–155. For Byzantium, see D. Ariantzi, *Kindheit in Byzanz. Emotionale, geistige und materielle Entwicklung im familiaren Umfeld vom 6. bis zum 11. Jahrhundert*, de Gruyter: Berlin - Boston 2012, 28–36. Infancy comprised the ages up to seven years old, being further divided into two phases, from birth until teething and/or end of weaning, and from teething until the age of seven.

42 In the Early Byzantine period children wore pierced coins, crosses, bells or tubular containers as amulets, see Pitarakis, Material Culture, 196–203.

43 The infant mortality was about 50%. Talbot, Death and Commemoration, 285–286. Ariantzi, *Kindheit in Byzanz*, 324–334.

44 Swaddling is witnessed from the Classical times through Byzantine, see M. Pomadère, Dressing and Adorning Children in the Aegean Bronze Age: Material and Symbolic Protections as well as Marks of An Age Group?, M.-L. Nosch – R. Laffineur (eds), *Kosmos. Jewellery, Textiles and Adornment in the Aegean Bronze Age. Proceedings of the 13th International Aegean Conference*, Peeters: Leuven – Liege 2012, 433–435. Carroll, Archaeological and Epigraphic Evidence, 148–164 (with many depictions of swaddled babies). Ariantzi, *Kindheit in Byzanz*, 77–79. In Greece for example it was practiced until the early 20th century, see Pitarakis, Material Culture, 178.

45 For Early Byzantine tunics of infants see Pitarakis, Material Culture, 178–186. M. Eichinger-Wurth, *Ein spätantikes Kinderkleid aus Ägypten in der Sammlung der Mode- und Kunstschule Herbststraße in Wien*, MA thesis University of Vienna: Vienna 2018, especially 49–99 (online access). For pictorial sources with children wearing tunicas, see Behling, *Kinderdarstellungen*, figure 154 (Massacre of the Innocents, Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome). F. Pennick Morgan, *Dress and Personal Appearance in Late Antiquity. The Clothing of the Middle and Lower Class*, Brill: Leiden – Boston 2018, esp. 116–129.

46 On a family photo of the year 1880, where boys and girls are not distinguishable as they wear the same clothing, see J. E. Baxter, *The Archaeology of Childhood. Children, Gender, and Material Culture*, Altamira Press: Walnut Creek 2005, 86–87, figure 8.

47 Single earrings in Early Byzantine child graves had been only occasionally observed by archaeologists, see for example P. Orsi, Di una necropoli dei bassi tempi riconosciuta nella contrada Grotticelli, *Notizie degli Scavi di Antichità*(1896), 341–342 (V, G, L-M), 344 (VIII, D-E), 345–346 (XIII, M-N), 348–349 (XVI, G-H). P. Drosogianni, Melissi, *Archaiologikon Deltion* 22, B1(1967), 219. For a single golden earring from a boy's grave in Argos see Metaxas, Schmuck und Kleidungszubehör, 388 figure 10.5, 389 figure 11.1. Athanasoulis – Vassiliou, *Byzantine Museum of Argolis*, 187, nr. 259. The phenomenon of the single earring

as a male gender marker, detectible in different cultures from Antiquity through to modern times, has attracted many scholars but its focus is on adults though, see Pitarakis, Material Culture, 188–190. M. Parani, Optional Extras or Necessary Elements? Middle and Late Byzantine Male Dress Accessories, P. Petridis – B. Foskolou (eds), *DASKALA. Papers in Honour of Professor Maria Panagiotidi-Kesisoglou*, Library S. Saripolou 122, S. Saripolou Foundation, University of Athens: Athens 2015, 414–419.

3 *Not even a band on my finger?* Rings of non-elite women

Florentia Evangelatou-Notara and Kalliope Mavrommati

In 6th-century Constantinople, the strolling street-performer Andreas was accompanied by a dog with 'miraculous' abilities. Although blind, the dog could discover carefully-hidden rings and coins borrowed from male and female bystanders who gathered to watch the trick, which was the identification of the rightful owner of each ring. This obviously fictional narrative is encountered first in John Malalas (*Chronographia,* chapter 18, section 51.1–14) and subsequently, in various versions, several chronicles and histories up to the 12th century.[1] What is particularly interesting about this story is that it is one of the rather few references to ordinary people in Byzantine literature, those who made up the entertainer's mixed audience of men and women of all social backgrounds, and it is the only reference to the fact that these people wore finger-rings, fashioned from a range of metals – gold, silver, bronze, and iron.

We know that Byzantine women were not as secluded as the Church Fathers would perhaps have wanted them to be.[2] Women circulated for social reasons and to supervise various tasks. In rural areas they were involved with farming activities (threshing, harvesting, herding, and others), and in urban environments they frequented the marketplace, while management of the family property and development of economic activity by widows, as household head,[3] were opportunities for action, as was the female presence and mobility in the dynamic, male-dominated, public space.[4] The bibliography on the life and activities of these non-elite women, which has grown considerably in recent years, as well as studies relating to Byzantine adornment and jewellery, also offer clues for detecting the use of one item of jewellery that was part of the adornment of all social classes in all periods, the finger-ring.

In this paper, we present a synthesis of information drawn from historical texts, as well as from iconography and archaeological material, in an attempt to investigate issues relating to the use of finger-rings by people in lower social circles, especially women. Such cases of rings, presented here for the first time, are derived from the partly-published private Collection of Florentia Evangelatou-Notara.[5] The texts that contribute to this study date mainly from the Middle and the Late Byzantine period, thus defining

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the time frame, although works of the Early Byzantine period are not precluded. The finger-rings in the corpus based on the said collection span the entire spectrum of the Byzantine period, enhancing both the renewal of designs – although some are repeated after a time lapse – and of artistic currents, and the diachrony of the use of rings in Byzantium, up to the beginnings of Post-Byzantine times **(catalogue figures 3.16, 3.18, 3.20 and 3.21)**. This approach raises questions about the finger-rings of the non-elite classes and attempts to give answers to them – even if some questions prove unanswerable. For instance: is there a difference between rings worn by women and rings worn by men? Did people wear one ring or several rings? In what circumstances did people opt to wear ring(s)? Who bought them? What could a ring indicate about the identity and self-representation of the owner? Specifically for women of the middle and lower socio-economic classes, in the cities and in the countryside, who at some point in time were able to spend a little money on purchasing non-essential objects, such as a finger-ring **(catalogue figure 3.17)**, the Byzantine literary sources are almost mute. These were women who felt the need to enhance or to improve their image, express their religious sentiment or personal aesthetic or imitate a role model. Were they widows in charge of the family finances? Were they given money be some man, husband or father, so as to purchase a trinket? Were they working women? What prompted them to make a purchase of this kind? Each one of these hypotheses could apply in Byzantine society, as the buying of such an object was not restricted by gender. However, the decoration of finger rings was subject, as we shall see, to certain social models, which are linked with a female's self-image even for women of the middle and lower-middle social classes with limited economic means.

Some information on the lifestyle and adornment of ordinary women can be gleaned from legal documents and narratives. The material is somewhat limited, but none the less suitable for comparative approaches to sources in different genres, regarding the use of and the prevailing social perceptions about the finger-ring, either as an object of special symbolic significance, or as part of a set of jewellery (parure). Inevitably, comparisons are drawn with data relating to the most affluent sectors of the population, for which there are more testimonies in the texts, the rationale being that certain trends were set by the upper echelons of Byzantine society and filtered down through the social scale to the lower orders.[6]

Finger-rings have been studied mainly in archaeology, from excavation finds, and in art, from iconography. Expensive rings, as art objects, accessories of the costume and part of the parure (necklaces, pendants, bracelets, and earrings), were obviously indicative of differences in social status, authority and wealth of women and men.[7] Published works indicate that the precious rings of men and women of the higher social strata were made from noble metals – gold and silver; many engraved and decorated with precious and semiprecious stones, enamel and niello – while seal-rings[8] reveal much about the dominant style in each period, the artistic skill of the goldsmiths

and developments in the minor arts.[9] Rings of humbler materials and base metals, such as copper alloys and iron, are represented far less in published catalogues, with the exception, in recent years, of those of aesthetic or other interest.[10] Even so, a satisfactory corpus of rings is available to research, both in museums and collections, and from excavations conducted in Byzantine cemeteries all over Greece, although the majority of the latter specimens remain unpublished, at least until they are conserved. Lately, more and more systematically, published archaeological reports include details about the size, the shape and the type of metal of low-cost finger-rings, as well as whether they belonged to men or women, as is deduced from the other grave goods –where these exist– or the study of the osteological material. Furthermore, there is a proliferation of studies of jewellery found in excavations. Even so, finger-rings certainly deserve more attention, because they provide material for studying the people who wore them. Particularly important is the association of the ring type with its archaeological context, as this provides reliable clues for its dating, in contrast to rings in collections, which have been cut off from their co-finds and can only be dated relatively on the basis of their typology. Certainly, from the abundance of such excavation finds, even of simple bands or hoop-rings, the observation can be made that ordinary women desired adornment[11] **(catalogue figures 3.6 and 3.22)** and resorted to cheaper jewellery so as to have the satisfaction of admiring on their hand(s) one or, in some cases, more finger-rings. In this framework, the most obvious conclusion is that finger-rings served to promote the female image in public,[12] possibly the marital status of women, the economic standing of households of limited means, the spiritual needs and notions which are imprinted in the ring's potency, particularly in the cases of rings engraved with religious representations or amuletic inscriptions,[13] as well as women's external beauty and appearance.

In the 12th-century satirical poem, poor Ptochoprodromos (poem 1.49–52) complained to the emperor that he was afraid of his feisty wife, who would rancour about his meagre contribution to the household. "I haven't seen on my finger not even a band, a ring; not even a bracelet have you given me,"[14] are among her grievances. It seems that the offering of rings and jewellery as gifts by the husband to his wife was customary, a social norm in the more sophisticated cultural milieu with which this source communed, even though it is written in the vernacular. It would seem to reflect then-current cultural concepts relating to a personal gesture as proof of the couple's strong emotive bond. Therefore, we cannot be certain that this reference describes a wider practice. However, probably a social model existed, which passed down also to the lower classes, perhaps initially in the cities. If we consider the custom of the prospective groom offering a betrothal ring to the prospective bride, as a token of their bond, which was common practice in all social strata from early times[15] **(catalogue figures 3.13a and 3.13b),** perhaps such gifts were made also after marriage[16] by couples which had the economic means to do so. Certainly, ordinances in the *Basilica* (vol. 4, B30,

tome 1), which concern the inheritance of jewellery or the dividing up of property at divorce, impose the obligatory return to the husband not only of the betrothal ring, but also of those pieces of jewellery that had been bought by him as gifts during the marriage.[17]

It seems that such gifts must have been usual, perhaps even social prerequisites, in a broad spectrum of the bourgeois social strata. An analogous story to that of Ptochoprodromos is encountered in a didactic poem (*ca* 1430) by Marinos Phalieros, a literatus of Venetian origin who lived in Crete. In the text, the father gives practical advice to his son about family life and points out the importance of ensuring harmony in the home, through the men satisfying the women's whims with gifts. Husbands were duty bound to keep their wives happy, in the interest of family serenity, but if the wives asked for "fabrics, hats and rings," the husbands had better respond by purchasing ornaments for the house (line 237–238)[18].

The *Dream-book* attributed to Achmet (*ca* 9th century) gives an insight into the deeper symbolisms of the finger-ring, which reflect these complex and probably widespread social norms. If a man dreams that he is giving his wife jewellery "even beyond his economic means," this is a message that he will gain fame and glory. In this dream scenario the adorned or unadorned woman is interpreted as manifesting the man's economic and social progress, in accordance with the social convention that accompanies the cited reference, namely that "the woman is his strength and power" (section 124.17–19, section 128.71–73).[19]

Certainly, such references from sources in two different genres may be understood in relation to the roles of the two sexes in a patriarchal society, as was the Byzantine, with regard to the success of marriage. The economic and social advancement of the husband, the family's only representative in public life and responsible for the family's protection and prosperity, is complemented by the virtues of his wife, who takes care of family stability and running the household. Consequently, since marriage was a symbol of the family's place in society,[20] the adornment of the wife is linked with the promotion in the public arena of the male status, as a trophy of his success, while the buying of rings and other items of jewellery by him was an expression of the couple's unity.[21] Of course, as Phalieros stresses, display of female vanity could lead also to problems, which is why it is better that the wife stay at home.[22] In an analogous framework, the rings in the *Dream-books* are interpreted and associated either with a ruling king or a wife and child, that is, either with social advancement and acknowledgement, by analogy with the rings of rulers, or with the wife and family (Achmet, *Oneirocriticon*, chapter 257, 258),[23] underscoring deeper meanings related to the man's position in the social hierarchy through marriage.

To return to the real world, some affluent households owned more than one precious ring, usually two or three, according to the surviving Byzantine wills.[24] We do not have such data for the households of the lower social orders, although the host of rings found together with other pieces of

jewellery, as part of the grave goods in female burials at some sites,[25] suggests that something comparable was going on also in such households. It is obvious that some families had finger-rings of humble materials, which were buried with the dead woman in her final resting place. Of course, it is not possible to determine the personal or even social factors involved with regard to the choice of rings and other jewellery items that accompanied the deceased in her grave. This is an issue that can be investigated only by systematic archaeological contextualization for these rings; the rings found in tiled-roof graves were certainly an indication of the economic status of the deceased woman.

Some rings were perhaps family heirlooms bequeathed from one generation to the next. Such practices are referred to in Byzantine texts, but only for male donors and quite wealthy ones at that. Women's wills and donation documents, surviving mostly from the Middle and Late Byzantine periods, leave no such pointers, since in known cases the ring with the rest of the fortune is donated to monasteries after death. From the cases of male donors, the ring is bequeathed to close members of the family, to male beneficiaries, close relatives in the male line, sons and grandsons. For example, Maximos Planitis's testament (paragraph 75.19–21, dated 1255), makes specific bequests of three gold rings and male jewellery (*large earrings*) to his son Theophilopoulos.[26] By the same token, Theodoros Sarantinos in his will of 1325 (no. 64, paragraphs 355.32–33, 358.35–41) leaves a fortune to members of his kin and a ring to his son. From the few surviving acts, it seems that rings were heirlooms bequeathed according to the personal preferences of the donor and his bond with the beneficiary.[27] There is no reason to doubt that there were corresponding bequests from women, in our case from the mother to the daughter, granddaughter, even the son or other close relatives, either through a will, if one had been drawn up, or privately in other appropriate circumstances, especially on the progeny's wedding day. The fact that rings were included in dowry contracts shows that they were counted also as heirlooms, at least the seal-ring, in addition to part of the family property, which obviously was considerable.[28] To date, there are no surviving marriage contracts from families of limited economic means, if indeed such contracts were made.[29] Already from the reign of Justinian, marriage was possible without a contract and only with a personal declaration of the couple's consent, in the presence of witnesses (*Ecloga* title 2, section 2: *unwritten marriage*).

Provincial trends in the excessive adornment of women with rings have been imprinted in the visual record, in two known cases: the full-bodied depiction of Anna Radini in the church of the Saints Anargyroi in Kastoria (1180–1190)[30] and the portrait of the female donor in the church of Saint Nicholas at Stanichene in Bulgaria (14th century).[31]Anna Radini, who belonged to the provincial aristocracy, displays her high social status through her formal costume, as does the anonymous donatrix with a total of 14 rings, conspicuous on all fingers including on phalanges. The practice of

adorning the hands with many items appears to have been in vogue among the wealthy and perhaps finds correspondence in the non-elite social groups in the decoration of the bride's hands with dowry or other gifts during the nuptial celebrations, which in places lasted several days.[32] On the wedding day specifically, it was customary for the bride to don the formal costume, the opulence of which depended on her family's economic means as well as its position in the local society. Rich brides were perhaps extravagantly dressed and lavishly bedecked with jewellery, in accordance with the customs and traditions of each region, as recorded in the folk tradition of early modern Greece. One of the very few extant Byzantine marriage contracts[33] is that dated 1447, from Venetian-held Corfu. Mastrodimitrios Moustounas dowers his daughter Zacharia with four costly rings, among them one gold seal-ring, with the note that it is "for the beautification of the bride" (Vatopediou, no. 230, paragraph 338.29–32). This mention in the text leads us to the hypothesis that some Byzantine brides were not only luxuriously attired but also wore many rings, thus showing off their dowry, which after the wedding would be part of the property of the couple.

The conspicuous adornment of women was not, of course, confined to the wedding day. Women in some provincial centres bedecked themselves on other occasions too, although there is no mention of finger-rings. One rare reference to the women of Nafpaktos, in the early 13th century, comes from a letter from Metropolitan Ioannis Apokaukos. As representative of the Church, Apokaukos censures the dances, to which the women had become "addicted from a young age," as well as the excessive adornment with expensive jewellery, earrings and pearl necklaces and other ornaments that were sewn skilfully along the length of the sleeves, making the garment extravagant in the Metropolitan's eyes (Bees, no. 77.51–59, dated to 1228).[34] Apokaukos's sartorial descriptions bring to mind the formal folk costumes of early modern Greece, which were an object of parental care or gift, together with jewellery and coins, in designs and decorations characteristic of each region, which women wore on special occasions.[35]

Certainly adornment with a ring or rings was impracticable for ordinary women, whose everyday life involved physical toil. Working women in urban centres and those who were perhaps able to bedeck themselves a little more perhaps chose to do so as part of showing their gender identity, as the population density in the cities and the close coexistence of diverse social strata and nationalities perhaps imposed more careful presentation of self, as indicative of social distinction, professional orientation, and so on.[36]

Moreover, in representations of ordinary women in various trades and scenes of daily life, in some cases adornment with jewellery, most often earrings but certainly not finger-rings, is discerned. Obviously, the manual tasks of all kinds would have made such a stylistic choice by the artist inappropriate. In contrast to other items of jewellery, the finger-ring, due presumably to its small size, is depicted hardly at all in compositions with women. Even less in representations of women of the countryside, who are

depicted harvesting or picking fruit, and so on.[37] In real life, for which we have evidence mainly from the surviving finger-rings of the period, working women who used their hands chose to wear, in the best case, one plain band, which would not hinder manual tasks and which possibly had an amuletic design to ward off the evil eye or to secure divine blessing **(catalogue figures 3.1–3.5, 3.7 and 3.8, 3.10)**, or perhaps a ring as a public declaration of betrothal. The same held too for the male population of the lower economic and social classes – farmers, manual labourers, artisans, and so on.

Most of the rings of non-precious metals (copper, copper alloys, iron) must have been ready-made and sold in the workshops of larger towns or at local festivals/fairs (*πανηγύρεις*).[38] Jewellery workshops excavated in big cities, such as Thessaloniki, confirm that there was direct sale to customers.[39] "Fairs" offered analogous opportunities for people living in provincial cities. Local or itinerant craftsmen would have undertaken commissions to meet the specifications of size, quality and iconographic preferences of the patron.[40] Finger-rings of notably small diameter perhaps belonged to girls and are most likely rings of couples betrothed in childhood or adolescence. The young age of betrothal, often from seven years old, and of marriage, in early puberty,[41] but also the habit of children wearing rings, after adult models, explain these types **(catalogue figure 3.19)**.[42]

In relation to the diameter of rings, a serious challenge for archaeologists is to date these objects, on the basis of the other grave goods and typology, and to determine whether the rings found in an excavation belonged to women or men. A common but misleading way is to identify the sex of the owner from the size of the ring's hoop, the first thought being that female rings would be of smaller diameter than male ones. Many of the surviving male rings can be identified confidently, as they bear inscriptions with a male name, as a signet of authentication.[43] Sometimes anthropological characteristics of the skeleton with which the ring was found can lead to a secure conclusion. It is often assumed that a significant difference in the ring's diameter shows that it belonged to a man or at least was made to fit a man's finger.[44] In general, however, the diameter of certain rings is a complex issue and by no means definitive for determining the sex of the owner.[45] It goes without saying that the fingers of a woman of the elite class would have differed from those of a working woman, since she had personnel in her service. What about the fingers of the maids who worked in the homes of the rich? Maybe they were less stressed than those of a peasant woman or of a woman who worked in retail food industries. What were the fingers like of all these women of the lower social and economic classes, who looked after the house and family, who toiled in the fields, cutting, binding in sheaves and carrying to the house produce of the harvest, kindle and wood for cooking, or who were laundresses?[46]

It is certain that some finger-rings were worn by both sexes (catalogue Figures 3.9a and 3.9b).[47] The only documentation of this practice comes from a rather controversial literary genre, in terms of origins: the Byzantine

romances. In these texts, rings and vows are intertwined and play a seminal role in the unfolding of the plot, and, in relation to what interests us here, rings were mutually exchanged by the couple.[48] Of course, in the romances, rings acquire potent yet common symbolic meanings from the perspective of gender; a topic which presents particular interest and merits systematic study.[49] The finger-rings exchanged are tokens of a bond, as is the case with betrothal rings or wedding rings, which from the 11th century onward were mutually exchanged in the marriage rite, as symbols of a double bond created by two equal partners, at least in the eyes of God.[50]

To conclude, historical and archaeological sources illustrate a broad and varied use of finger-rings of humbler materials in the non-elite social sphere during the Byzantine period. It is often not clear from the co-finds whether rings belonged to a man or a woman, except in cases where there is specific evidence, mainly inscriptions, denoting the owner's sex. As we have said, in the absence of corroborative archaeological documents, the diameter of rings can be misleading with regard to determining the sex of the wearer and indeed because it seems that very often finger-rings were exchanged between men and women and were worn by both sexes, perhaps on a different finger. Without doubt, finger-rings cross the gender barrier, but it is possible that in some circumstances women wore rings designed for males, rather than the other way round. The issue of the combination of finger-ring and other pieces of jewellery as well as with the costume cannot be answered because there are no descriptions or depictions of women of the lower economic and social strata wearing finger-rings.

Beyond a doubt, women of vulnerable economic or social position, throughout the centuries and across human cultures, have found ways to express a love of beauty and elegance, as well as the primordial need of both sexes from adornment of the human body, by using jewellery of cheaper materials. Byzantine women would be proud of rings that were tokens of parental love, declarations of betrothal and marital union, signs of faith and virtue, or expressions of delight. Ordinary women in Byzantium also had the need to project, through less expensive jewellery and finger-rings, the social and economic standing of their household, and certain family heirlooms, so imitating wealthier women. It seems that the uses and the semiotics of the finger-ring, as imprinted in the Byzantine sources, extended from the wealthy and elite sectors of the population to the lower social classes.

The manifold sociological symbolisms of the ring as an object of beauty and an insigne of social position, and to a degree also of economic standing, for non-elite women, by analogy with corresponding interactive models of the aristocracy, are clear. Without doubt, the finger-ring is perhaps the only piece of jewellery that emits clear messages about the social standing of men and women, particularly because of its role in the ritual of uniting two people, and constitutes a visual statement about a mutual promise of unity and commitment. These aside, in general the finger-ring as an item of jewellery that is constantly visible to its wearer, and indeed on the hand, the part of the human body that performs actions, is from this position a reminder of the wearer's authority (even over the family), social status (economic standing,

social group, personal life – symbol of a tie between man and woman), social responsibility (in the case of seal or signet rings, guarantee of commercial transactions or stamping contracts in a society in which few people were literate), possibly some achievements in life, religious credo (the invocation of heavenly protection and the projection of religious sentiment) and, as we have said, the commitment, most commonly marriage. In the broad sense, it could be argued that the finger-ring also projects the inner connection of the self both with the outside world and the unseen world, as it is a continuous reminder of a certain reference point, a spiritual or social symbol that is projected explicitly also to the outside observer.

Consequently, the finger-ring is a piece of jewellery that is related directly to self-representation. In the case of the lower social classes, it was worn more likely on special occasions in public, as it hindered the fingers from carrying out everyday manual tasks that also entailed the risk of its loss. Certain trends were followed as to when and where rings and other jewellery should be worn, which depended on local and contemporary modes of social self-representation, as well as on the personal choices of each woman in her everyday life, such as whether she did manual jobs or not. According to the Byzantine sources, on occasions such as the wedding or a feast-day, ordinary women who had the economic means were permitted to bedeck themselves with jewellery, finger-rings and grander garments. These are occasions of social performance and display, of various of the symbolisms described above, and for ordinary women central axis of this performance was the principal pillar of the family, the male protector, either as father or as husband, whose virtues were projected through her image. Again in Byzantine texts, mainly the dream-books and the romances, the female in her finery is linked clearly with the self-image of a male supporter, that is, the provider for the family, either the husband or the father. Focusing reflects yet again an androcentric gaze linked with the economic standing of the man, who is the protagonist in public life; behind whom appears the woman who represents him. The jewellery that, according to social models, the man is required to offer the woman, has important performative aspects relating to the generosity and the affection shown by the father/husband as award for the woman's contribution to creating and sustaining family unity, which completes and promotes his social standing. In these cases, projection of the female mirrors his male qualities.

It seems that even in the humblest cases the most important rings and jewellery were undoubtedly those that had some symbolic value in the eyes of their female owners. Perhaps it is these items that are found in female graves and were closely connected with the deceased, rather than passed on to her descendants. Apart from objects for adorning the dead body, in accordance with local customs, they were in some way cherished personal effects, possibly linked directly with the dead woman, through a major event in her life, most probably marriage.

Marriage is an event that again is based in many ways on male choice. It is the occasion when the father gives his daughter to the man he has chosen, on the basis of various criteria, as a suitable husband for her, with the

promise that she will look after her spouse and their family. In exchange, her husband will not only provide her with the social privileges associated with marriage, but also obligate himself to award visibly her contribution to forming a good family, of which he is head. The image of wives waiting for their husbands to offer them various pieces of jewellery and rings is clearly imprinted in some Byzantine texts and perhaps reflects a certain social requisite of married women also of the middle social groups, but who were socially refined.

Of course, there was no ban on women buying jewellery for themselves, in order to satisfy a modest vanity. Some women could purchase rings by their own means, given that some were managing their own money, while widows who were household heads had authority over family property. Even so, it is not certain that the business acumen, for example, or financial independence of women was able to cultivate the self-esteem that was expressed in the purchase of a piece of jewellery as a personal, professional or a sentimental statement of a particular personal need or even of personal happiness, because these were not merely subjective choices for which there is no evidence in the texts but would have been rather rare and isolated cases of women with some significant financial capability.

For widows, even of the middle classes, especially for those who had financial uncertainties and dependents, bedecking with jewellery, even finger-rings, and even more so their purchase, was not consistent with the social reality of widowhood. If they did wear jewellery, this was perhaps the ring of their late husband, if it was in their possession, or a ring with religious representation, amuletic or apotropaic, just like many other women, in order to draw strength on a difficult path that was fraught with insecurity for the female without male support.[51] Certainly widows, notwithstanding their greater economic dynamic that has been pointed out in modern research,[52] would have been subject to stricter social scrutiny than married women, especially in closed rural communities; social scrutiny that certainly defined also their self-representation, which is linked with adornment. It goes without saying that here too further research is required regarding the social models that widows in Byzantium had to follow, models that were probably not unlike the corresponding ones prevailing during the early modern period in Greece and which remained largely effective in society until the mid-20th century.

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1 P. Koukoules, *Vie et civilization byzantines*, vol. 3, Institut Français d'Athènes, Papazisis: Athens 1949, 248 (in Greek). J. Duffy, Mondo Cane: Some Comments on two Performing Dog Scenes from Byzantium, S. Kotzabassi – G. Mavromatis (eds), *Byzantina Realia,* Byzantinisches Archiv 22, De Gruyter: Berlin – New York 2009, 35–41.

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5 For more information about the Collection see the Introduction to the following catalogue. For the published work see F. Evangelatou-Notara, Κύριε Βοήθη… Δαχτυλίδια με αποτροπαϊκές-φυλακτικές επιγραφές και σύμβολα, V. Leontaritou – K. A. Bourdara – E. S. Papagianni (eds), *Antecessor: Festschrift für Spyros N. Troianos*, Sakkoulas: Athens 2013, 1191–1207. F. Evangelatou-Notara, Δακτυλίδια τοξοτών, καρδιόσχημα, δακρυόσχημα. Από τη μάχη στην κοσμηματοθήκη, T. G. Kolias – K. G. Pitsakis (eds), *Aureus: Volume Dedicated to Professor Evangelos K. Chrysos,* National Hellenic Research Foundation – Institute of Historical Research: Athens 2014, 197–211.

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7 These ideological models have their roots in Greco-Roman Antiquity. See for example the noun *αἰγλίδια* (*items of glamour*) given for rings of authority in the Lexicon of Hesychius (5th–6th century, no. 1711). This name most probably echoed the gold rings that distinguished Roman citizens by their rank. A. M. Stout, Jewelry as a Symbol of Status in the Roman Empire, J. L. Sebesta – L. Bonfante (eds), *The World of Roman Costume*, University of Wisconsin Press: Madison 1994, 77–100. For finger-rings as an indicator of social and economic status see for example

Drandaki, Jewelry, 157. M. G. Parani, Optional Extras or Necessary Elements? Middle and Late Byzantine Male Dress Accessories, P. Petridis – V. Foskolou (eds), *DASKALA. A Honorary Tribute to Prof*essor *Emerita M. Panayotidi-Kesisoglou*, University of Athens – Saripoleio Idryma: Athens 2014, 410.

8 According to the *Basilica* (Band 2, tome 2, section 71.1–17) seal-rings did not count as jewellery.

9 We cite indicatively titles of publications that include Byzantine finger-rings, not always exclusively, as well as collective volumes in which there is a special section about rings. F. H. Marshall, *Catalogue of the Finger Rings, Greek, Etruscan, and Roman, in the Departments of Antiquities*, British Museum: London 1907 (reprint 1968). O. M. Dalton, *Franks Bequest. Catalogue of the Finger Rings Early Christian. Byzantine, Teutonic, Mediaeval and Later*, various publishing houses: London 1912 (reprinted Franklin Classics 2018). S. de Ricci,*Catalogue of a Collection of Ancient Rings formed by the Late E. Guilhou*, unknown publishing house: Paris 1912. M. C. Ross, *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Mediaeval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection*, vol. 2, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection: Washington D.C. 1965. A. Ward and others, *La bague de l' Antiquité à nos jours*, Office du Livre: Fribourg 1981. M. Wenzel, *Ornament and Amulet: Rings of the Islamic Lands. (The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art 16)*, The Nour Foundation – Khalili Collections: London 1993. A. B. Chadour, *Ringe. Die Alice und Louis Koch Sammlung. Vierzig Jahrhunderte durch vier Generationen gesehen*, Maney: Leeds 1994. A. Gonosová – C. Kondoleon, *Art of Late Rome and Byzantium in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts*, The Museum: Richmond 1994. *Greek jewellery*: *6000 years of tradition*, Hellenic Ministry of Culture-*Archaeological Receipts* and Expropriations *Fund:* Thessaloniki 1997. L. Wamser – G. Zahlhaas, *Rom und Byzanz, Archäologische Kostbarkeiten aus Bayern*, Hirmer: München 1998. A. Geroulanou, *Diatrita. Gold Pierced-Work Jewellery from the 3rd to 7th Century*, Benaki Museum: Athens 1999. J. Albani (ed.), *Το Βυζάντιο* ως *Οικουμένη*, *Ώρες Βυζαντίου. Έργα και Ημέρες στο Βυζάντιο*, Hellenic Ministry of Culture – Byzantine and Christian Museum: Athens 2001. J. Albani and others. (ed.), *The City of Mystras*, Hellenic Ministry of Culture – 5th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities: Athens 2001. D. Papanikola-Bakitrzi (ed.), *Daily Life in Byzantium. Byzantine Hours. Work and Days in Byzantium,* Hellenic Ministry of Culture – Museum of Byzantine Culture: Athens 2002. J. Spier, *Late Antique and Early Chistian Gems. Spätantike – frühes christentum-Byzanz. Kunst im ersten Jahrtausend. Reihe B: Studien und Perspektiven*, Band 20, Reichert: Wiesbaden 2007. K. Totev, *Golden Signet – Rings from the Time of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom 1185–1396*, Faber: Veliko Tarnovo 2010. A. Bosselmann-Ruickbie, *Byzantinischer Schmuck des 9. B 13. bis frühen 13. Jahrhunderts. Untersuchungen zum metallenen dekorativen Körperschmuck der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit anhand datierter Funde. Spätantike-Frühesfrühes Christentum – Byzanz. Kunst im ersten Jahrtausend. Reihe B: Studien und Perspektiven,* Band 28, Reichert: Wiesbaden 2011. J. Spier (ed.), *Byzantium and the West, Jewelry in the First Millennium*, Paul Holberton Publishing – Les Enluminures: London 2012. A. Drandaki – D. Papanikola-Bakirtzi – A. Tourta (eds), *Heaven and Earth, Art of Byzantium from Greek Collections*, Ministry of Culture and Sports – Benaki Museum: Athens 2013. J. Spier, *Late Byzantine Rings 1204–1453*, Reichert: Wiesbaden 2013.

10 Davidson's work on the finger-rings found in the excavations at Ancient Corinth remains fundamental. G. R. Davidson, *Corinth. Results of Excavations Conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*, *vol. XII*: *The Minor Objects*, American School of Classical Studies at Athens: Princeton N.J. 1952.

11 On the 'importance of adornment' in Byzantine society see A. Walker, Adornment: Enhancing the Body, Neglecting the Soul?, Kalavrezou, *Byzantine Women*, 233–273.

12 J. Lindblom, *Women and public space. Social codes and female presence in the Byzantine urban society of the 6th to the 8th centuries*, PhD thesis University of Helsinki – Faculty of Arts: Helsinki 2019, 212–223.

13 Even the attire of ordinary women, which is modelled on the more elaborate costumes of the affluent groups, confirms the complementing of the female image with jewellery. For the dress of ordinary women see J. L. Ball, *Byzantine Dress, Representation of Secular Dress in Eighth to Twelfth-Century Painting*, Palgrave Macmillan: New York 2005, 79–82. T. Dawson, Propriety, Practicality and Pleasure: The Parameters of Women's Dress in Byzantium, A.D. 1000–1200, Garland, *Byzantine Women*, 41–75. P. Kalamara, Η βυζαντινή γυναικεία ενδυμασία, Panayotidi-Kesisoglou, *Women in Byzantium,* 171–180.

14 P. Koukoules, *Vie et civilization byzantines*, vol. 3, Institut Français d'Athènes, Papazisis: 1951, 390: bands, wires or rings.

15 A prospective groom offered his bride-to-be a borrowed ring that he would later replace, probably when he became financially stable, a customary act, popular until modern times in Greece. Such an act is mentioned in the *Basilica*, vol. 4, 1962, B 30, 1: 36.4–5.

16 There are numerous studies on the ceremonial of the marriage rite and on the rings, from all perspectives. In the Early Byzantine period the man gave the woman a bridal ring, which did not play a part in the marriage rite, and sometimes and/or a belt. From the 11th century, men too wore a betrothal ring on the right hand. The two rings were included in the wedding service prior to the 11th century. T. Talbot-Rice, *Everyday Life in Byzantium*, Batsford Putnam: New York 1967, 159–160. S. I. Papadatos, *Περί τῆς μνηστείας εἰς τό βυζαντινὸν δίκαιον*, Pragmateiai of the Academy of Athens 50: Athens 1984, 47. J. Meyendorff, Christian Marriage in Byzantium: the Canonical and Liturgical Tradition, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 44(1990), 104–106. Parani, Optional extras, 410–411. Parani, Bridal Costume, 196–197, 207. Walker, Marriage, 217.

17 On divorce see A. Laiou, Chapitre IV: La Divorce et la Tonsure, *Mariage, Amour et Parenté à Byzance aux XIe-XIIIe siècles,* Travaux et mémoires du Centre de recherche d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance, Monographies 7, De Boccard: Paris 1992, 113–121. P. Karlin-Hayter, Indissolubility and the "Greater Evil": Three 13th-Century Divorce Cases, R. Morris (ed.), *Church and People in Byzantium, Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies: Twentieth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies,* Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies, University of Birmingham: Birmingham 1990, 87–105. Nikolaou, *The Woman in the Middle Byzantine Period*, 92–103.

18 Cf. C. Maltezou, Βενετικὴ μόδα στὴν Κρήτη (Τὰ φορέματα μιᾶς Καλλεργοπούλας), *Βυζάντιον. Ἀφιέρωμα στὸν Ἀνδρέα Ν. Στράτο*, v. 1, Athens 1986, 139–147.

19 Although the work echoes the Persian tradition, the fact that it was written in Greek and that the author had lived in Byzantium gives the impression that it reflects Byzantine social and behavioural norms. S. M. Oberhelman, *The Oneirocriticon of Achmet: A Medieval Greek and Arabic Treatise on the Interpretation of Dreams*, Texas Tech University Press: Lubbock 1991, 131, 136.

20 See for example the conclusions drawn by M. Angold, The Wedding of Digenes Akrites: Love and Marriage in Byzantium in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries, Angelidi, *Daily Life,* 207.

21 The offering of such gifts could be interpreted as expressing sentiments in marriage, but it is not easy to speculate about such psychological factors. For relations between spouses and marital love, in accordance with the canons of the Church see A. Kiousopoulou, *Ο θεσμός της οικογένειας στην Ήπειρο κατά τον 13ο αιώνα*, Sakkoulas: Athens 1990, 107–110. A. Laiou, Une Seule Chair: Les Rapports entre Époux XIe–XIIe siècles, *Mariage, Amour et Parenté,* 97–100.

22 Detorakis, Καλλωπισμός, 579, 581 perceptively points out that such practices lead to the "financial exhaustion of the spouses and the ruination of the family

economy" but also to "amorous jealousy which is naturally aroused in the husband by the excessive vanity of his wife".

23 There are various scenarios for the finger-ring in dream-books. Oberhelman, *Oneirocriticon*, 226–227.

24 M. G. Parani, Byzantine Jewellery: The Evidence from Byzantine Legal Documents, C. Entwistle – N. Adams (eds), *Intelligible Beauty. Recent Research on Byzantine Jewellery*, British Museum Research Publication 178, British Museum: London 2010, 187. J. Herrin, In Search of Byzantine Women: Three Avenues of Approach, J. Herrin (ed.), *Unrivaled Influence: Women and Empire in Byzantium*, Princeton University Press: Princeton – Oxford 2013, 21–24.

25 For example, at the locality Kokkinovrachos in the village of Anavra, Karditsa, a Middle Byzantine cemetery with 78 pit graves has come to light. Despite their poor condition, the skeletons were supine with the hands on the chest. Bronze and iron grave goods (finger-rings, earrings, bracelets, pendants, etc.), which accompanied female burials, were retrieved. These are exhibited in the Tripolis Archaeological Museum, Thessaly. As far as we were able to establish, they are still unpublished. S. Kougioumtzoglou, Metallic finds from the sanctuary of Asclepius at Trikka (excavations By Demetrios Theocharis 1965), A. Mazarakis-Ainian (ed.), *Αρχαιολογικό Έργο Θεσσαλίας και Στερεάς Ελλάδας* 5 (2015), vol. I, 607–609, 612 (in Greek, summary in English).

26 In another will, of 1314, Theodoros Karavas (no. 30, paragraph 216.39-40) leaves to Ioannes, probably his son, various moveable objects, together with two gold and two silver finger-rings. For rings in legal documents such as wills see Table 1 by Parani, Byzantine Jewellery, 186. For another case of a comparable gift, in the work of Demetrios Chomatianos (13th century), see Kiousopoulou, *Ο θεσμός,* 79.

27 Parani, Byzantine Jewellery, 191.

28 For the dowry according to Church Law see N. P. Matses, *Τὸ οἰκογενειακὸν δίκαιον κατὰ τὴν νομολογίαν τοῦ Πατριαρχείου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως τῶν ἐτῶν 1315–1401*, Athens 1962, 157–163. For research issues relating to the dowry in rural societies and for the transmission of property through the dowry see Laiou, The Role, 273–241. A. Laiou, Family Structure and the Transmission of Property, J. Haldon (ed.), *The Social History of Byzantium*, Wiley-Blackwell: Chichester 2009, 55, 61–62, 68–72.

29 The Church obligatorily blesses the marriage from the reign of Leo VI (10th c.). For the issue in further detail see Walker, Marriage, 216. Nikolaou, *The Woman in the Middle Byzantine Period*, 81, 85. A. E. Laiou, Women in the History of Byzantium, Kalavrezou, *Byzantine Women*, 27–28. K. Nikolaou, The Byzantines between Civil and Sacramental Marriage, *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique moderne et contemporain* 1 (2019), 5.

30 For an analysis of the depiction see J. L. Ball, *Byzantine Dress, Representation of Secular Dress in Eighth to Twelfth-Century Painting*, Palgrave Macmillan: New York – Basingstoke 2005, 120, 69–73. Cf. M. Chatzidakis, Supplementary Note, M. Chatzidakis (ed.), *Kastoria, Mosaics – Wall Paintings Byzantine Art in Greece*, Melissa: Athens 1999, 38–43. For the political significance of the depiction see D. A. Mamangakis, Anna Rhadene: Provincial Aristocratic Women in 12th c. Byzantium as Seen from Donor Portraits, *Byzantina Symmeikta* 22(2012), 71–100 (in Greek, abstract in English).

31 She wears three rings on each hand. Totev, *Golden signet rings*, 70, figure III.20. According to Maria Parani, Optional Extras, 409, the practice of wearing more than one rings was probably widespread also among men in the provinces.

32 The nuptial celebrations could take place before or after the wedding rite. Walker, Marriage, 216. Parani, Bridal Costume, 196, 205–207, 210. Nikolaou, *The Woman in the Middle Byzantine Period*, 82–83.

33 Marriage contracts of this period have survived from Cyprus, where, as on Corfu, there was also a mixed population and roots from the West are numerous.

See indicatively A. Dincer, Wills, Marriage and Business Contracts: Urban Women in Late-Medieval Cyprus, *Gender & History* 24/2(2012), 310–332.

34 Apokaukos derides female softness and the carefree adolescent life, as well as, among other things, the making of women's jewellery by goldsmiths and silversmiths and craftsmen working with pearls, without the parallel addiction to corporeal hardships. P. Magdalino, The Literary Conception of Everyday Life in Byzantium. Some General Considerations and the Case of John Apokaukos, *Byzantinoslavica* 48(1987), 31–32. K. Lampropoulos, *Ioannis Apocaucos. A Contribution to the Study of His Life and Work,* Historical Monographs 6, Vassilopoulos: Athens 1988, 250–251 (in Greek, summary in English). V. Katsaros, Από την καθημερινή ζωή στο «Δεσποτάτο» της Ηπείρου. Μαρτυρία του μητροπολίτη Ναυπάκτου Ιωάννη Αποκαύκου, Angelidi, *Daily life,* 660–661. During the Early Byzantine period, an ordinance in the Theodosian Code prohibited actors (*μιμάδες*) from weiring precious finger-rings. See Detorakis, Ο γυναικείος καλλωπισμός, 581.

35 By the same token, the Orthodox Church in the 18th century tried to limit these extravagant adornments, granting permission to brides for adornment only on their wedding day and for one week after. S. Asdrachas, *Greek Economic History, XV–XIX Century*, vol. I, Piraeus Group Cultural Foundation: Athens 2003, 538–540.

36 For this subject see indicatively P. Kalamara, Clothing and Personal Adornment: The Semantics of Attire, Drandaki –Papanikola-Bakirtzi –Tourta, *Heaven and Earth,* 225–226. A. Kaldellis, Ethnicity and Clothing in Byzantium, K. Durak – I. Jevtić (eds), *Identity and the Other in Byzantium: Papers from the Fourth International Sevgi Gönül Byzantine Studies Symposium, İstanbul 23–25 June 2016*, Koç University Suna Kıraç Library: Istanbul 2019, 41–52.

37 For such depictions see A. G. Mantas, Presentations of the Household Chores of Women in Byzantine Art: A First Approach, Panayotidi-Kesisoglou, *Women in Byzantium,* 55–70 (in Greek, abstract in English). S. Germanidou, Illustrating Female Peasant Labor in Middle and Late Byzantine Iconography. Visual Pretexts Towards "Gender Equality" or Depictions of "Physical Subordination"? *Byzantion* 88(2018), 163–185. A rare reference to women participating in the vintage is found in a decision of the Metropolitan of Naupaktos Ioannes Apokaukos (ed. Pétridès, nr 14.7–8). H. N. Angelomatis-Tsougarakis, Women in the Society of the Despotate of Epiros, *Jahrbuch der Österreichen Byzantinistik* 32/2(1982), 476. Kiousopoulou, *Ο θεσμός*, 120–121.

38 On this issue see A. Lampropoulou, Οι πανηγύρεις στην Πελοπόννησο κατά τη μεσαιωνική εποχή, Angelidi, *Daily Life in Byzantium,* 391–310. M. Gerolumatou, *Merchants, Markets and Trade in Byzantium (9th–12th c.)*, Monograph 9, National Hellenic Research Foundation – Institute of Historical Research: Athens 2008, 265–273.

39 A considerable quantity of jewellery was found in graves dating to between the 13th and the 15th century in excavations conducted beside the fortification walls of Thessaloniki. The finds include both products of local workshops and imports from elsewhere. Commercial and workshop spaces associated with silver- and goldsmithing have been excavated in Thessaloniki in recent years, occasioned by the construction of the Metro. These spaces yielded a large number of finger-rings and moulds for jewellery-making. *Archaiologikon Deltion* 66(2011), 727, 730–731. A. C. Antonaras, Middle and Late Byzantine Jewellery from Thessaloniki and Its Region, B. Böhlendorf-Arslan – A. Ricci (eds), *Byzantine Small Finds in Archaeological Contexts, BYZAS* 15(2012), 121, 123–124. A. C. Antonaras, Late Byzantine Jewellery from Thessaloniki and its Region: The Finds from Ippodromiou 1 Street and Other Excavations, A. Bosselmann-Ruickbie

(ed.), *New Research on Late Byzantine Goldsmiths' Works (13th–15th Centuries)/ Neue Forschungen zur spätbyzantinischen Goldschmiedekunst (13.-15. Jahrhundert)*, Byzanz zwischen Orient und Okzident 13, Veröffentlichungen des Leibniz-Wissenschafts Campus Mainz, Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums: Mainz 2019, 77–78. For workshops on the outskirts of Constantinople see Spier, *Late Rings*, 12–13.

40 For itinerant jewellery-makers there is evidence mainly from recent times. K. Korre-Zografou, *Χρυσικών έργα 1600–1900. Συλλογή Κ. Νοταρά*, ELIA Literature and Historical Archive: Athens 2002, 64–65.

41 The legal age of marriage for girls was about 12 and for boys 14. However, betrothal could take place even at seven years old, with the consent of the parents who took the decision and organized the procedure. On betrothal see Kiousopoulou, *Ο θεσμός*, 25, 28–36. Laiou, Women in the History, 28. Walker, Marriage, 218. Nikolaou, *The Woman in the Middle Byzantine Period*, 73. For the betrothal ring see Parani, Bridal Costume, 207.

42 Finger-rings as grave goods have been found in child burials, especially from Middle Byzantine period onwards. B. Pitarakis, The Material Culture of Childhood in Byzantium, A.M. Talbot – A. Papaconstantinou (eds), *Becoming Byzantine. Children and Childhood in Byzantium*, Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Symposia and Colloquia 1, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection: Washington D.C. 2009, 178, 187, 193–195.

43 Another category of men's rings are those used by archers, both warriors and hunters. Evangelatou-Notara, Δακτυλίδια τοξοτών, 197, 211.

44 Walker, Parallels, 854–856.

45 See the corresponding finger-ring given by Goudelis to his wife Maria, which is 2.3 cm in diameter. Bosselmann-Ruickbie, *Byzantinischer Schmuck,* 287, figure 137.

46 With regard to signs of stress in female skeletal remains, due to the heavy labour of women during their lifetime, see the example presented by S. Gerstel, who diagnosed in a female skeleton from Attica that the thumb and first fingers of the woman's right hand showed unusual stress, probably due to continuous spinning. S. E. J. Gerstel, *Rural Lives and Landscapes in Late Byzantium, Art Archaeology, and Ethnography*, Cambridge University Press: New York – Cambridge 2015, 94–95.

47 G. Vikan, Art and Marriage in Early Byzantium, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 44(1990), 151. Parani, Bridal Costume, 196.

48 Even though many influences from foreign works are apparent in these sources, it is generally agreed that they recount common social practices and perceptions, and that they had an influence in society. R. Beaton, *The Medieval Greek Romance*, Routledge: London-New York 1996, 67–86. C. Jouanno, Women in Byzantine Novels of the Twelfth Century: An Interplay Between Norm and Fantasy, Garland, *Byzantine Women*, 141–162.

49 For example, in the 10th century Byzantine epic *Digenis Akritas* (Grottaferrata: B.2.269–270; B.4.364–365; Escorial: line 472–475) the ring is the par excellence object reinforcing the heroes' bond, while at the same time it is part of the development in the flow of the narrative. A. A. Papadopoulos, Το μαγικό δαχτυλίδι, *Archeion Pontou* 13 (1948), 12–15. R. C. Fonseca, The Ring, the Gown, and the Apple: the Role of Magical Objects in the Byzantine Vernacular Romance *Kallimachos and Chrysorroi, Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 44/2(2020), 246–250.

50 Walker, Marriage, 222, 224. Signs of gender 'equality' in Byzantium can also be found in certain aspects of Byzantine law. K. Bourdara, *Η διάκριση των φύλων ως κριτήριο στις ρυθμίσεις των Νεαρών του Λέοντος Στ΄ του Σοφού*, Forschungen zur byzantinischen Rechtsgeschichte Athener Reihe 19 – Sakkoulas: Athens

2011, 183–187. For the distribution of the paternal property see Kiousopoulou, *Ο θεσμός*, 85–87. For signs of 'equality' in everyday peasant labour cf. the conclusions of S. Germanidou, Female peasant labor, 163–185. For a short but inspired evalutation of Byzantine views on the sexes see L. Neville, *Byzantine Gender*, Arc Humanities Press: Leeds 2019, 23–30.

51 See indicatively Nikolaou, *The Woman in the Middle Byzantine Period*, 178–182.

52 See indicatively Laiou, Family Structure and the Transmission of Property, 57.

Catalogue of finger-rings from the collection of Florentia Evangelatou-Notara

The Collection of Florentia Evangelatou-Notara began to be formed in 1975, and today includes about 600 finger-rings from the Roman, Byzantine, Post-Byzantine and modern periods to the mid-20th century, which are being studied systematically in order to publish a catalogue raisonné. Most of the rings were purchased in Athens, in antique shops whose owners are second or third generation antique dealers; a large part of the objects they sell was accumulated in the years before the Second World War, which indicates their authenticity. A few rings have been acquired abroad, mainly in London and Turkey. In addition, there are about 200 rings originating from various countries of Asia and Africa, the majority of them purchased in these countries (Turkey, Persia, India, Myanmar, Uzbekistan, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, Yemen, and elsewhere), which are outside the scope of the present study.

Presented in the following catalogue are finger-rings made of copper or copper alloys, which were worn by women and/or men of the middle and lower classes. The dates for these rings are established on the basis of the typology of each item (see pages 2 and 5 of the text), according to the stratigraphy and the co-finds of the excavation, on the basis of public and private collection,s and of the international bibliography.

A considerable number of the rings published here are amuletic-apotropaic, and they are of particular interest for the subject of this article. These items echo man's need for refuge in and the protection of the Divine, alongside the need to avert evil **(catalogue figures 3.1–3.5, 3.7, 3.8, 3.10, 3.12, 3.14, 3.15 and 3.19)**; thus, the role of the rings is at once established as amuletic and apotropaic.[1] Some of the finger-rings published in this study are female, although, as has been said, it is not possible to determine which ones; given that most women possibly believed in the evil eye in Byzantine times, as was the case in modern Greece,[2] where, until at least the mid-20th century, it was customary for women to put amulets on their children to ward off and protect them from the evil eye **(catalogue figures 3.15,**

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3.12–3.14). In the Early Byzantine period, but also later, there are references to women who made and sold amulets.[3] However, it is not known whether their best customers were women. Thus, women wore these finger-rings that were ready made – and usually mass-produced, like many others – in order to avert and to protect them from evil, even though women were not able to read, so as to hear out loud, the messages in the inscriptions. Furthermore, the close contact between body and finger-ring, as well as the continuous display of the finger-ring, must have strengthened hope for the warding off of evil and the possibility of rapid recovery in the case of illness.

Some finger-rings carry an image of a holy person or an inscription that includes the owner's name (the majority of humble rings with the owner's name are for men), if they were made to order, or simply the invocation ΚΥΡΙΕ ΒΟΗΘΕΙ (O Lord help) when ready-made.[4] Two finger-rings[5] with the inscription Κ(ΥΡΙ)Ε Β(ΟΗΘ)Ι ΚΑΛΗ (O Lord help Kali) are known. Is this a woman's name (Kali), or that of an epithet (good)? The second possibility is more likely, since these specimens are ready-made. Of particular interest for the issue of rings of women in lower social circles is the ring in the Tsolozidis Collection, with the device in reverse, indicating that the ring was used as a seal. So, here we come across a woman who was involved in trade and needed to use a seal to expedite her business affairs. The rest of the rings presented are exclusively for adornment **(for example catalogue figure 3.11)**.

Figure 3.1 Finger ring with the incised inscription ΑΓΙΟC (Saint), Early Byzantine period, collection of Florentia Evangelatou-Notara (@author, Florentia Evangelatou-Notara).

Catalogue figure 3.1
Early Byzantine period
d.: 2.1 cm
wt: 3.7 gr.
collection nr.: 577

Cast finger-ring. On the elongated ovoid bezel, the incised inscription ΑΓΙΟC (Saint),[6] in a stippled frame, remnants of which can be discerned above and below the inscription. The hoop is slightly convex outside, the flaring shoulders are emphasized by a notch. The piece belongs to the group of mass-produced finger-rings of amuletic-apotropaic character.

Figure 3.2 Finger ring with the figures of the Virgin and Child in the type of the Odigitria (Our Lady who shows us the way), 6th–7th century, collection of Florentia Evangelatou-Notara (@author, Florentia Evangelatou-Notara).

Catalogue figure 3.2
6th–7th century
d.: 2.1 cm
wt: 7.8 gr.
collection nr.: 550

Cast finger-ring. Represented on the circular plate of the conical bezel of the figure of the Virgin and Child in the type of the Odigitria (Our Lady who shows us the way), in profile, executed with deep, careful incision. Both the head of the Christ-Child and of the Virgin are depicted frontal, with emphasized facial features. The Theotokos bends slightly at the waist, from her hand hangs a pleated textile, while the drapery on her garment and on the Child's swaddling bands are incised; her feet are visible. Incised to the left is a palm tree and to the right a cross. Remnants of the initial gilding survive on the high relief and in some incisions, as well as on the cone of the bezel and on the hoop. The hoop is of circular cross-section, slightly wider on the shoulders and, despite the oxidation, still preserves the gilding.[7] Shortly after the transfer of the icon of the Odigitria to Constantinople, by Eudokia (+460), local craftsmen began making tiny copies of the holy image on metal finger-rings.[8] Moreover, it was said that earlier, in the 4th century, the inhabitants of Antioch commemorated the city's archbishop, Meletios, by engraving his image on ring bezels.[9] In the cases noted, it is not known whether the finger-rings with the images of holy persons were worn by women or men. However, it is assumed that such rings would have had greater appeal for women, given their great piety, which is projected by the finger-ring and thus making said piety more widely known.

Figure 3.3 Finger ring with the figure of Christ between two angels and the Apostles, 6th–7th century, collection of Florentia Evangelatou-Notara (@author, Florentia Evangelatou-Notara).

Catalogue figure 3.3
6th–7th century
d.: -
wt: 7.8 gr.
collection nr.: 554

Bronze cast finger-ring. The hoop is broken. On the round surface of the conical bezel is the figure of Christ between two angels, with the apostles below, all incised in a minimalist manner.[10]

Figure 3.4 Finger ring with incised a five-point star (pentacle), 10th–11th century, collection of Florentia Evangelatou-Notara (@author, Florentia Evangelatou-Notara).

Catalogue figure 3.4
10th–11th century
d.: 1.7 cm
wt: 6.2 gr.
collection nr.: 574

Cast in one piece. Round bezel incised with a five-point star (pentacle), the symbol engraved on the ring that God gave to Solomon, in order to overcome all the devils.[11] At the centre and in the triangles formed, as well as in the spandrels formed by the triangles, are incised dots. The whole motif is inscribed in an incised circle. On the shoulders are guilloches ending in small three-leafed branches. On the basis of the decoration on the shoulders and the overall aspect of this finger-ring, it can be dated to the 10th–11th century. The symbol of the Solomon Star or pentacle was used to counteract illnesses and also to exorcise daemons. Characteristic is a Late Antique seal with the pentacle and the inscription ΥΓΙΕΙΑ (Hygieia = goddess of health),[12] while on a seal in the Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, there is the device of the cross and the pentacle, magical signs with religious associations.[13]

Figure 3.5 Finger ring with the figure of Christ, 6th–7th century, collection of Florentia Evangelatou-Notara (@author, Florentia Evangelatou-Notara).

Catalogue figure 3.5
6th–7th century
d.:-
wt:-
collection nr.: 578

Incised finger-ring. On the almost circular bezel is a spare rather abstract representation of Christ. Incised on his elongated head are two dots in the position of the eyes, while more emphatic dots around the face indicate the hair. Above the head, which is encircled by a halo, oblique lines denote heaven; incised in reverse on either side are the letters IOY (in abbrevation) and C OY (in abbreviation) – the ring was obviously used as a seal. The garment is shown by three serrated lines. The device is inscribed in a frame that follows the shape of the bezel. The faceted hoop is slightly wider on the shoulders.[14] Similar finger-rings with representation of Saint Symeon the Stylite are dated to the late 6th-early 7th century.[15]

Figure 3.6 Finger ring with granulated decoration, 9th–10th century, collection of Florentia Evangelatou-Notara (@author, Florentia Evangelatou-Notara).

Catalogue figure 3.6
9th–10th century
d.: 1.92 cm
wt: 11.0 gr.
collection nr.: 328

Finger-ring cast in one piece. On the bezel is granulated decoration which extends also onto the shoulders, forming a flower. At the top is a flat plaque imitating a cabochon. Barely discernible on the lower part of the hoop are traces of a boss.[16]

Figure 3.7 Finger ring with the full-bodied figures of two saints, 10th–13th century, collection of Florentia Evangelatou-Notara (@author, Florentia Evangelatou-Notara).

Catalogue figure 3.7
10th–13th century
d.: 1.8 cm
wt: 6.4 gr.
collection nr.: 456

Finger-ring cast in one piece with notch on the shoulders. Of apotropaic character. Incised on the bezel are full-bodied figures of two saints. Perhaps they are healing saints, such as Cosmas and Damianos.[17] The figures are represented in an austere, abstract manner, and one of them has raised arms.[18]

Figure 3.8 Finger ring with incised dotted circles, 12th–13th century, collection of Florentia Evangelatou-Notara (@author, Florentia Evangelatou-Notara).

Catalogue figure 3.8
12th–13th century
d.: 2.0 cm
wt: 3.8 gr.
collection nr.: 251

Cast finger-ring with incised decoration. The bezel is slightly oval and divided by four arcs. In the spandrels created are incised dotted circles in an abstract imitation of an eye. The hoop, which is soldered to the bezel, is slightly convex outside and narrows a little on the shoulders.[19]

Figure 3.9a Finger ring with elliptical bezel, concave on the inside, 12th–14th century, collection of Florentia Evangelatou-Notara (@author, Florentia Evangelatou-Notara).

Catalogue figure 3.9a
12th–14th century
d.: 1.9 cm
wt: 6.9 gr.
collection nr.: 382

Cast in one piece. Plain elliptical bezel, concave on the inside, for better fit on the finger.

Lightly-incised lines, clumsily executed. The hoop is slightly wider on the lower part.[20]

Figure 3.9b Finger ring with nail-shaped bezel and pointed finials, 10th–12th century, collection of Florentia Evangelatou-Notara (@author, Florentia Evangelatou-Notara).

Catalogue figure 3.9b
10th–12th century
d.: 1.9 cm
wt: 9.5 gr.
collection nr.: 423

Cast in one piece and incised. Nail-shaped bezel with pointed finials. Incised on the surface are two scrolls, picked out in niello. The hoop is hollow and convex outside, with an arris along its entire length. The shoulders are slightly narrower than the rest of the hoop and carry horizontal and vertical incisions picked out in niello.

Figure 3.10 Finger ring with the inscription ΚΥΡΙΕ ΒΟΗΘΗ (O Lord help) in a cruciform monogram, 10th–11th century, collection of Florentia Evangelatou-Notara (@author, Florentia Evangelatou-Notara).

Catalogue figure 3.10
10th–11th century[21]
d.: 1.8 cm
wt: 8.3 gr.
collection nr.: 576

Finger-ring with large ovoid bezel incised with the inscription ΚΥΡΙΕ ΒΟΗΘΗ (O Lord help) in a cruciform monogram. The device is surrounded by an incised circle and the ground is decorated with incised dots. The ring is cast in one piece and flat inside. The bezel is flat outside, while the hoop is slightly convex; on the shoulders is a guilloche framing an X.

Figure 3.11 Finger ring with an incised dove and a worm in its beak, Middle Byzantine period, collection of Florentia Evangelatou-Notara (@author, Florentia Evangelatou-Notara).

Catalogue figure 3.11
Middle Byzantine period
d.: 2.2 cm
wt: 4.3 gr.
collection nr.: 566

Band-ring, cast and incised. On the bezel, inside a dotted frame, is an incised dove with a worm in its beak. Dots on the body and wings of the bird, as well as in the interstices between the bird and the frame. The hoop, broken at one point, is flat inside and slightly convex outside. It widens appreciably on the shoulders, where there are incised saltire crosses (cross of Saint Andrew), which probably terminate in the Christogram.[22]

Figure 3.12 Finger ring with the figure of Christ Pantocrator, 9th–12th century, collection of Florentia Evangelatou-Notara (@author, Florentia Evangelatou-Notara).

Catalogue figure 3.12
9th–12th century
d.: 1.8 × 2.0 cm
wt: 6.9 gr.
collection nr.: 551

Finger-ring cast in one piece, incised, oxidized. The bezel is oval with tiny projections on the long sides. Deeply incised on the surface is the figure of Christ Pantocrator, within a frame. The hoop is slightly convex outside and flat inside. Incised on the shoulders are straight lines and on the rest of the hoop curved lines and dots.[23]

Figure 3.13a A pair of finger rings with chain motif, late 5th century, collection of Florentia Evangelatou-Notara (@author, Florentia Evangelatou-Notara).

Catalogue figure 3.13a
late 5th century
d.:1.8 cm and 2.0 cm
wt:7.5 gr. and 8.4 gr.
collection nos: 38 (right), 39 (left)

nr. 38: Cast. The square bezel is framed at the base by double chain motif. On the hoop, which is soldered to the underside of the bezel, run lozenges with a row of dots on either side. Triangles with granulation on the shoulders.

nr. 39: Cast. The square bezel is framed at the base by double, thick chain motif. On the hoop, which is soldered to the bezel, runs an astragal with thick chain motif on either side.[24]

Finger-rings nos 38 and 39, which display many similarities and only slight differences (a small difference in diameter of the hoop, which is richly decorated, particularly on the small ring), raised several questions. They were purchased in an antique-shop in Athens, several decades ago. How did they come to be together? Are they from the ruins of some Byzantine workshop? Are they wedding-rings of a couple, which accompanied their wearers in the last resting place?[25] Such questions cannot, of course, be answered.[26] Coincidentally, the same Collection includes two later rings (late 19th and early 20th century, nos 606 and 607), which were likewise purchased in Athens, but in a different antique-shop, about 20 years ago. These are clearly rings of a couple (different diameter, initial of names), which for reasons unknown, came into the stock of the antique-shop at some time. From the coincidence of the two pairs of rings, we consider it most likely that the Byzantine pair belonged to spouses. This pair of rings **(Catalogue figure 3.13b)** from early modern time is included in this catalogue, in order to demonstrate the continuity of tradition and customs (burial, funerary or other). Even today in Greece, widows wear the wedding ring of their deceased husband together with their own. Moreover, it is a fascinating coincidence that there are two pairs of rings, probably with the same semeological meaning, in the same collection.

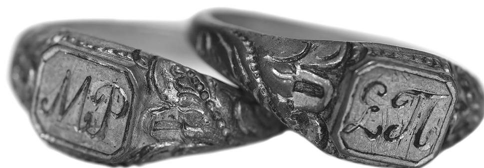

Figure 3.13b A pair of finger rings with the initials ΣΠ, late 19th–early 20th century, collection of Florentia Evangelatou-Notara (@author, Florentia Evangelatou-Notara).

Catalogue figure 3.13b
Late 19th–early 20th century
d.: 2.2 cm
wt: 5.5 gr.
Dimensions of bezel: 1.0 × 0.9 × 0.2 cm (Initials MP, left); 1.0 × 0.9 × 0.2 cm (Initials ΣΠ, right)
collection nrs: 606, 607

Figure 3.14 Finger ring with a three-line inscription K(YPI)EB/OHΘHAN(N)A (O Lord help An(n)a, 10th–11th century, collection of Florentia Evangelatou-Notara (@author, Florentia Evangelatou-Notara).

Catalogue figure 3.14
10th–11th century
d.: 2.0 cm
wt: 4.7 gr.
collection nr.: 575

Cast, with a flat, slightly oval bezel incised with the three-line inscription K(YPI)EB/OHΘHAN(N)A (O Lord help An(n)a,[27] in reverse, within an incised frame. The letters are well-formed, deep and distinct. The same inscription is encountered on other finger-rings, and had earlier prompted the deliberation as to whether the three letters of the last line (ANA) denote the name of a specific owner (Anastasios, Anna) or the epithet "ανάξιος" (*anaxios*: unworthy). A. Yangaki argues persuasively in a well-documented article concerning this inscription on finger-rings that this formula denotes the owner of the item of jewellery and reader (*αναγινώσκων*) of the inscription, and rejects the proposal that ANA stands for the adjective *ανάξιος*. Limited use-wear is observed on the underside of the bezel. The shoulders and part of the hoop are formed with three toothed sections.

Figure 3.15 Finger ring with an octagonal bezel, Middle Byzantine period, collection of Florentia Evangelatou-Notara (@author, Florentia Evangelatou-Notara).

Catalogue figure 3.15
Middle Byzantine period
d.: 1.8 cm
wt: 4.5 gr.
collection nr.: 469

Finger-ring cast in one piece. Octagonal bezel with relief circle at the centre and relief rim around the bezel. A decorative stone was probably set in the circle at the centre. On the lower part of the hoop is a small protuberance. The octagonal shape of the bezel indicates an apotropaic function of the ring.

Figure 3.16 Finger ring with a bezel formed so as to give the impression of a flower, 14th–15th century, collection of Florentia Evangelatou-Notara (@ Florentia Evangelatou-Notara).

Catalogue figure 3.16
14th–15th century
d.: 2.0 cm
wt: 10.7 gr.
collection nr.: 467

Cast. Bezel formed so as to give the impression of a flower. The hoop is slightly convex on the outside and on the lower part is an elongated boss.

Figure 3.17 Finger ring with a lozenge-shaped bezel decorated with four large globules, 11th century, collection of Florentia Evangelatou-Notara (@author, Florentia Evangelatou-Notara).

Catalogue figure 3.17
11th century
d.: 2.1 cm
wt: 4.2 gr.
collection nr.: 503

Cast in one piece. The lozenge-shaped bezel is decorated on either side with four large globules. The hoop is flat on the inside and slightly convex on the outside.[28] Introduction to finger-rings with wavy outline.

Figure 3.18 Finger ring with wavy outline, 14th–15th century, collection of Florentia Evangelatou-Notara (@ author, Florentia Evangelatou-Notara).

Catalogue figure 3.18
14th–15th century
d.: 2.1 cm
wt: 12.5 gr.
collection nr.: 506

A special design is that of finger-rings with wavy outline. This characteristic design is encountered possibly from the 13th century, certainly from the 14th and continues or re-appears, which means it lasted until the 19th century.

Figure 3.19 Child's finger ring, 14th-15th century, collection of Florentia Evangelatou-Notara (@author, Florentia Evangelatou-Notara).

Catalogue figure 3.19
14th–15th century
d.: 1.1 cm
wt: 4.4 gr.
collection nr.: 472

Child's finger-ring cast in one piece. On the bezel is a cross with rays in the interstices. The rim of the bezel is slightly wavy, due to the incisions with which it is decorated. The

hoop is narrower on the shoulders, which are decorated with incisions, while on the lower part is a trapezoidal boss.[29]

Figure 3.20 Finger ring with a lozenge formed from curving lines and leaves in cruciform arrangement at the centre, 14th–15th century, collection of Florentia Evangelatou-Notara (@author, Florentia Evangelatou-Notara).

Catalogue figure 3.20
14th–15th century
d.: 2.0cm
wt: 8.3 gr.
collection nr.: 306

Cast and incised finger-ring. The bezel is integral with the hoop. On the surface of the bezel, a lozenge is formed from curving lines. At the centre are leaves in cruciform arrangement. Hatching in the elliptical spandrels formed between the lozenge and the external frame. The incisions are picked out in niello. The hoop is convex on the outside, widens on the shoulders and has a lozenge-shaped boss on the lower part.[30]

Figure 3.21 Finger ring with an eight-petalled rosette and wavy outline, 15th–16th century, collection of Florentia Evangelatou-Notara (@author, Florentia Evangelatou-Notara).

Catalogue figure 3.21
15th–16th century
d.: 2.1cm
wt: 12.9 gr.
collection nr.: 30

Cast and engraved finger-ring. The bezel is integral with the hoop. On the bezel is an eight-petalled rosette; the wavy outline reinforces the impression of a flower. The incisions are picked out in niello. Wide hoop, convex outside with a round boss on the lower part.[31]

Figure 3.22 Finger ring with spirals framed by separators with oblique lines, 13th–15th century, collection of Florentia Evangelatou-Notara (@ author, Florentia Evangelatou-Notara).

Catalogue figure 3.22
13th–15th century
d.: 2.0 cm
wt: 10.5 gr.
collection nr.: 241

Cast in one piece and incised. The circular, slightly convex bezel is elevated on a cylindrical neck. Incised on the surface are incomplete spirals framed by separators with oblique lines. At one point there is no separator with oblique lines, because the craftsmen miscalculated the space available for the device. The incisions are picked out in niello. The hoop is narrower on the shoulders, with hexahedral bosses at the sides,[32]incised in squares, and a hexahedral boss without incision on the lower part. Convex outside, with arisen circling the entire hoop.[33]

Notes

We would like to thank photographer Chris Tsiakiris for his excellent work on perfectly picturing the rings of the collection.

1 See Evangelatou-Notara, Κύριε Βοήθη, 1191–1207. Interesting is the combination of the Christian faith with the attempt to avert the evil eye, which is imprinted in various objects; a copper-alloy cross is decorated with concentric circles like eyes, for this purpose. See The George Tsolozidis Collection. Byzantium Through the Eyes of a Collector, Hellenic Ministry of Culture-Archaeological Receipts Fund and Expropriations: Athens 2001, 21, figure 6. P. Kampanis, Φύλαξ. Τα φυλακτά της ύστερης Αρχαιότητας, Grafima: Thessaloniki 2017, 157, plate 71.

2 During the period of Ottoman rule in the Balkan Peninsula, amulets of silver or humbler metal were worn, on which there were incised or relief figures of Christ, theVirgin, Saint George and other saints.

3 Kampanis, Φύλαξ, 243.

4 Mis-spellings are often noted in the inscriptions, a phenomenon not confined to rings of cheap material but observed also on finger-rings of wealthy individuals or even court dignitaries. This raises the issue of the level and extent of literacy in the population.

5 A. Yangaki, A Byzantine Ring fron ancient Messene bearing the Inscription "K(YPI)E <B>OHΘH ANA: A Contribution to a Group of Rings with the same inscription, E. P. Sioumpara – K. Psaroudakis (eds), 24 Papers in Honor of Professor Petros Themelis from His Students and Colleagues, Society of Messenian Archaeological Studies: Athens 2013, 295. Tsolozidis Collection, 88, nr. 112.

6 L. Y. Rahmani, On Some Byzantine Brass Rings in the State Collections, Atiquot, English Series 17(1985), 177, plate XLIII: C.

7 Ross, Catalogue, 138, nr. 179 O, plateXCVIII (late 6th century). For the elevated conical bezel see 55 nr. 64, 56 nr. 65, plate XLII. G. Vikan, Early Christian and

Byzantine Rings in the Zucker Family Collection, Journal of the Walters Art Gallery 45(1987), 37 figure 19, 39 figure 14, 40 figure 20. Papanikola-Mpakitrzi, Daily Life, nrs 572, 574. Greek jewellery, nr. 196.

8 G. Vikan – J. Nesbitt, Security in Byzantium: Locking, Sealing and Weighing, Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, Menil Foundation Collection, Byzantine Collection Publications 2, Dumbarton Oaks: Washington D.C. 1980, 19. G. Vikan, Security in Byzantium: Keys, XVI Internationaler Byzantinisten-kongress, Akten II/3/ Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik 32/3(1982), 503–511. Ch. Angelidi – T. Papamastorakis, Η Μονή των Οδηγών και η λατρεία της Θεοτόκου Οδηγήτριας, M. Vassilaki (ed.), Μήτηρ Θεού. Απεικονίσεις της Παναγίας στη βυζαντινή τέχνη, Αθήνα 2000, 373. J. Spier, Μήτηρ Θεού, Ενότητα 2η, 294-295. G. Vikan, Early Christian and Byzantine Rings in the Zucker Family Collection, Journal of the Walters Art Gallery 45(1987), 40–49, figures 19, 20.

9 K. Mentzou-Meimari, Απεικονίσεις δημοφιλών αγίων. Angelidi, Daily Life in Byzantium, 589.

10 D. Scarisbrick, Rings. Jewelry of Power, Love and Loyalty, Thames & Hudson: London 2007, 132 nr. 1822 (silver finger-ring embellished with niello, with representation of the Ascension, 6th century).

11 The pentacle became an enduring symbol with wide appeal; we cite as indicative bibliography P. Perdrizet, Σφραγίς Σολομώντος, Revue des Études Grecques 16(1903), 42–61. Dalton, Catalogue, 13, nrs 73, 74. Davidson, Corinth, plate 104, nrs 1872 (page 229), 1873, 1897, plate 105, nrs 1927 (pages 242–243: 6th century or later), 1928 (page 243, 6th century or later), 1929 (page 243, 6th century or later), 1930 (page 243, 10th or 11th century), plate 106, nr. 1939 (page 230, 10th or 11th century). Bonner, Studies in Magical Amulets chiefly Graeco-Egyptian, University of Michigan Press – Oxford University Press: Ann Arbor – London 1950, 208–213. A. Fourlas, Der Ring in der Antike und im Christentum. Der Ring als Herrschaftssymbol und Würdezeichen. Forschungen yur Volkskunde begründet von Georg Schreiber herausgegeben von Bernhard Kötting und Alois Schröer, Heft 45, Regensberg: Münster 1971, 117–118. D. Drumev, Orfevrerie, Academie Bulgare des Sciences Institut des Arts. Heritage arti Bulgare, Éditions de l' Academie Bulgare des Sciences: Sofia 1976, 365. G. Vikan, Art, Medicine, and Magic in Early Byzantium, Dumbarton Oaks Papers 38(1984), 76 note 67. M. Bajalović–Hadži-Pešić, The Collection of Jewelry in the Belgrade City Museum, unknown publishing house: Beograd 1984, plate XL, figure 3. Papanikola-Bakitrzi, Daily Life, 586, figure 836. B. Lippolis, L' oreficeria nell' imperio di Constantinopoli tra IV e VII secolo, Edipuglia: Bari 1999, 195, 210, nr. VII.3.a.16. G. Oikonomaki-Papadopoulou – B. Pitarakis – K. Loverdou-Tsigarida (eds), Εγκόλπια. Ιερά Μεγίστη Μονή Βατοπαιδίου, Mount Athos: Mount Athos 2000, 348 figure 147. J. Albani, Δακτυλίδια της Βυζαντινής και Μεταβυζαντινής Συλλογής Χανίων, Acts of the 10th International Cretological Conference, vol. B2, Chania 2011, 123–135, pls 7-8, figs 9, 10, 128–129, plate8. In more recent metal-working, the pentacle was used frequently on filigree belt-buckles of Cyprus. E. Papadimitriou, Cypriot Ethnography Collections in British Museums, Nicosia 2000, 98, nr. 29.

12 Vikan, Art, Medicine, and Magic, 69, fig 4.

13 S. Troianos, Μαγεία και διάβολος από την Παλαιά στη Νέα Ρώμη, *Archaeologia* 71 (1999), figure on page 11.

14 It was possibly octagonal. Today four angles survive; the others, if they existed, have disappeared due to use-wear.

15 They have come to light in Israel, in excavations conducted in the area of Gush Halav. Rahmani, Brass Rings, 176–177, plateXLIII, nrs 12C.

16 Bosselmann-Ruickbie, Byzantinischer Schmuck, fig 181 (Presthlava Hoard, 9th–10th century), figs 182–184 (Doukas Collection), undated.

17 For other finger-rings with representations of saints see Tsolozidis collection, 84 nr. 97. Specifically for finger-rings with figures of soldier-saints see Vikan, Zucker Family Collection, 41. For soldier-saints on Cretan rings of modern times G. Kaplani, Modern Greek Silverware from the Collections of the Museum of Greek Folk Art, Hellenic Ministry of Culture: Athens 1997, 121 fig 2357 (in Greek).

18 Tsolozidis collection, 84, nr. 97 (10th–12th century), 98 (12th–13th century). B. Radojković, Jewellery with the Serbs (XII–XVIII Century), Beograd 1969, 329 and figs 4 (12th–13th centuries). Bajalović – Hadži-Pešić, Collection of Jewelry, 91 nr. 311, plateVII/6 (12th century).

19 D. Miloševič, Jewelry from the 12th to the 15th Centuries from the Collection of National Museum, Belgrade 1990, 57–58 nrs 1-6 (12th–13th centuries). E. Maneva, The Medieval Jewellery of Macedonia, Skopje 1992, 207, nr. 65/2, plate89.

20 Miloševič, Jewelry, 73–75, nrs 57–64 (13th–14th and 12th–13th centuires).

21 Bosselmann-Ruickbie, Byzantinischer Schmuck, 158.

22 Papanikola-Bakitrzi, Daily Life, 449, nrs 603, 604, 605.

23 Dalton, Catalogue, 12 nr. 64. Davidson, Corinth, 239, plate104, nrs 1882–1886, 1888–1890. Ross, Catalogue, nrs 118, 119, 124, 125. Greek jewellery, nrs 253, 270. L. Wasmer – G. Zahlhaas, Rom und Byzanz, Archäologische Kostbarkeiten aus Bayern, Hirmer: München 1998, 226, nr. 338. Papanikola-Bakitrzi, Daily Life, 442, nr. 579, 445, nrs 590, 591, 450, nr. 606, 451, nrs 612–614. J. Albani, In der Hoffnung auf ewiges Leben, Grabbeigaben aus der byzantinischen und nachbyzantinischen Sammlung in Chania/Kreta, Byzantina et Neograeca Vindonbonensia Band XXIV, Wiener Byzantinistik und neogräzistik. Beiträge zum Symposion vierzig Jahre Institut fü byzantinistik und neogräzistik der Universität Wien im Gedenken an H. Hunger, Wien 2004, 57–58, figs 16, 18, 19. Totev, Golden signet rings, 160 nrs 1, 2, 4, 5, 7. Bosselmann-Ruickbie, Byzantinische Schmuck, 299–310 nrs 165–190, 198 (9th–12th century), nr. 244 (11th–12th century), plate 165 (8th–9th century), pls 172, 191.

24 Davidson, Corinth, 228 and 235 nrs 1830–1832 (6th–7th century) and 1833 (10th–12th century).

25 This does not mean, of course, that they both died at the same time.

26 This is the familiar problem regarding objects in a collection, for which there are no data on context (find-spot, whether they were grave goods, and so on).

27 A silver finger-ring with the inscription ΚΕ ΒΟΗΘΗ ΑΝΑ appeared for auction at Christies (Sale 7661, 24 November 2008, London, King Street). The question arises whether the engravers wrote the name ANNA with one N because of the limited space or whether they wanted to denote some other name, such as ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΟΣ? See for example Tsolozidis collection, 88 nr. 111. Evangelatou-Notara, Κύριε Βοήθη, 1194.

28 Bajalović – Hadži-Pešić, Collection of Jewelry, 86 nr. 266, plate VII/4 (11th century).

29 Milošević, Jewelry, 117, nr. 155 (14th–15th century).

30 Milošević, Jewelry, 72, nr. 53, 133 nr. 93, 134, nrs 194, 195 (14th–15th century). E. Skouteri-Didaskalou (ed.), Τα πολύτιμα της παράδοσης, κοσμήματα, στολίδια, φυλαχτά από τις συλλογές του Λαογραφικού Μουσείου ΑΠΘ, του Μουσείου Βυζαντινού Πολιτισμού και του Μουσείου Μπενάκη και τα δακτυλίδια-γλυπτά της Αφροδίτης Λίτη. Aristotle University of Thessaloniki – Museum of Byzantine Culture: Thessaloniki 2007, 70, BI. 6.

31 Milošević, Jewelry, 147, nr. 234 (15th–16th century).

32 For bosses on the shoulders of a finger-ring of the 13th or 14th century see E. Dori – P. Belissariou – M. Michailidis, Κάτω Κάστρο. Η πρώτη φάση των ανασκαφών στο βενετικό φρούριο της Χώρας Άνδρου, Andriaka Chronika 34(2003), 175 and plate XI B, a.

33 Milošević, Jewelry, 73, nr. 59 (13th–14th century), 96 nr. 112 (14th century), 111 nr. 142 (14th–15th century), 112–113, nr. 145 (15th century), 117–118 nrs 156–159 (15th century). Maneva, Medieval Jewellery, 180, plate 92, nr. 54/36 (for the dating see page 178). H. Tesic-Vuletic, With no Beginning or End. Finger Rings from the Jewelry Collection of the Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade, Beograd 2016, 40 (15th–16th century).

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Part II

Working girls

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4 Women and beekeeping – a forbidden liaison (?). Scattered evidence with emphasis on Christian era (Byzantine - Medieval culture)

Sophia Germanidou

There have always been, perpetuated even in the Modern era, barriers to employment mainly and more persistently for women, primarily imposed by social beliefs, secondarily but equally effectively by religious "taboos." This claim becomes more interesting when it is observed to be also extended to common occupations or light peasant chores, on an inter-temporal and intercultural basis, thus becoming a kind of historically solid case of "gender discrimination." The relationship between women and beekeeping appertains to this category and will be examined specifically in the cultural context of the Byzantine and comparatively, to the Western Middle Ages, with geographical and chronological extensions from the distant past to the pre-industrial societies. This "off-limits" overview is deemed necessary so as to better understand the phenomenon described.

Before proceeding to a brief and rudimentary approach of the present topic, the key content question is why beekeeping is chosen as a field of research into gender roles. The answer has been given already, by the relatively newly emerged scientific field of cultural entomology, which has, on the one hand, recognised the enormous impact of insects on the history of civilisation as such and on the other, distinguished the catalytic role of social Hymenoptera (bees, ants, wasps) in shaping social relationships and ideological beliefs.[1] In particular, the practice of beekeeping, and specifically, working at honey harvest (for example the opening of hives and the cutting of honeycombs) by women was loaded with dense, multi-meaning "gender complex" semiotics. On the contrary, ancillary tasks overtaken by women such as accompanying the male beekeeper, maintaining the good shape of the apiary or processing the beekeeping products did not appear to be subject to gender or other "metaphysical" prohibitions.

A second question that arises relates to methodology: what evidence could be used to demystify aspects of this subject such as the time of commencement and the diachrony of the phenomenon, its geographical-cultural spread with its focal or its parallel points, the degree and scope of its impact on collective psychology, the popular belief system or its "social class" restriction, the reasons for its imposition by intellectual or religious patriarchy. At the moment, the signs of its manifestation which will constitute the

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body of evidence are few, scattered, indirect and connotative, quantitatively and qualitatively poor in content. They are to be found in depictions (manuscript miniatures), textual sources (diverse and various), ethnographic parallels (photographic material). A main part in the study shall constitute the comparison to the evidence of Western Medieval culture, which, despite the local differences (from southern and central Europe to Scandinavia), provide several illuminating findings. This source-pluralist methodology with interdisciplinary approaches has been already applied to less investigated academic fields, especially in Gender Studies.[2]

First traces of "beekeeping labour division" between the sexes are detected already through the numerous prehistoric rock-paintings on wild honey hunting and an attempt to interpret their potential social imprint has been made. There are indications of women being present, but overall their participation is considered unusual, holding a secondary-supporting role rather than a main one.[3] To strengthen this hypothesis, the sex identity of the male harvester is demonstrated with emphasis on his genitalia, while this does not always happen with the other figure accompanying him. This casts doubt on scholars who acknowledge that at that time, rather for practical reasons such as the difficulty of accessing and collecting hives in high or steep places, the presence but not the participation of women in wild honey hunting missions was not forbidden; women were poorly represented co-operating with men, however they could be present and play a secondary role in the whole procedure.[4]

At the stage of domesticated beekeeping (:arranged apiaries with man-structured beehives) this changed completely. There is no iconographic or even textual hint implying that beekeeping was a task equally exercised by both sexes; it was clearly a "man's job". This also arises from the meagre figurative and written testimonies of that era coming from the wider area of Egypt[5] and the Middle East in general. In Greece, the presence of women has been noted in Minoan and Mycenaean miniature art works, which have recently been daringly interpreted as beekeepers[6] or as participants in a kind of "ecstatic ritual dance".[7] However, they may be considered as implications rather than clear representations of active, real participation in the bee harvest. In ancient Greek mythology, the Bee was personified and a mythological dimension was attached to her; allusions have been made even to sacred virgins and nymphs keeping bees,[8] although no accurate description of their beekeeping role has been established.

Very few such cases are documented through the abundant, in other respects, information on beekeeping in Egyptian papyrii. In a papyrus of 256 BC the request of a widow, named Sencho, is addressed to the royal guardian of Philadelphia (today's Faiyum), asking to transfer her bees to a pasture land.[9] This testimony is very important as it is clearly stated that a woman could, at least at that time and in that area, own and keep bees, perhaps even suggesting that she could also be a beekeeper. To the extent that we know, no

such reference is repeated nor is to be found a reference of a female beekeeper quoted not only in papyrii but also in later Byzantine-era texts.

Meanwhile, the ancient Greek and Roman literature started establishing the pattern of the identification of a worthy, hardworking and, above all, chaste woman with the bee.[10] In the writings of Aristotle, the first scientist beekeeper, the idea of the a-sexual bee is formulated (*History of Animals* III.10.759b), a creature believed to have had no genitalia and accordingly, not to be able to copulate.[11] This theory has had an enormous influence over time, has shaped social and religious prejudices and had dogmatically prevailed until the Age of Enlightenment. In the Early Christian centuries this traditional identification of the bee with the virtuous woman appears to have had a decisive influence on the harvest process itself, as the beekeeper had to abstain from sexual intercourse a few days before the honey harvest. This custom is imparted by Greek and Roman writers of that time as Columella (*On Agriculture* IX, 14.3): "the day before he must be chaste and pure from all venereal affairs", Plutarch (*Advice to bride and groom* 144D, 44.1): not to follow with wives the practice observed in approaching bees because these insects are thought to be irritable and bellicose towards men who have been with women… to be pure and clean from all connexion with others when they approach their hives, Elian (*On the Nature of Animals* 5.11): "(the bee) recognises a man who comes from an unchaste bed, and him also it pursues, as though he were its bitterest foe", Palladius (*On Agriculture* 1, 37.4 and 4, 15.4): "let a clean and chaste keeper frequently attend", who repeats it in the 4th century, giving the impression that it was based on a strong, widespread, non-negotiable assumption. The roots of this "custom" are probably to be traced back to ancient Greek myths such as Eurydice and Orpheus, Aristeos and bougonia.[12]

It would be of great interest to investigate whether, why and how other, popular prejudices or, perhaps, practical reasons, influenced the formulation of this peculiar stereotype that was upgraded to a custom with strong presence. At least in Roman times even the use of female slaves in agricultural work was generally prevented by ideologies related to the contaminating power of the menstrual blood. Indeed, Columella himself believed that if a woman during menstruation touched, or even looked at shoots, fruits, crops, these would then wither, die (*On Agriculture* XI. 38, XI. 50). He even advised the extermination of insect-affected crops with the presence of a girl experiencing her first menstrual period (*On Agriculture* X. 358–366). Also, Plinius (*The Natural History* XI.15) believed that "bees have a particular aversion to a thief and to a menstruous woman".

A physical function of the female body was therefore linked to catastrophic consequences and hence her participation in agricultural-livestock farming activities, and explicitly in beekeeping, was subsequently forbidden.[13] This particular practice was shaped on a solid socio-metaphysical-folklore basis that could not be established, as we shall see, over time, only

if it was accidental or just a product of popular assumptions. Bees hate odors and this has been known since the beginning of beekeeping. This is why the beekeeper's cleanliness is mentioned as a prerequisite along with his purity in the harvesting process. Perhaps secretions, hormones, pheromones, indeed had a more pronounced effect on bees that caused aggression or, in general, a reaction that at that time could not be scientifically explained.

Although the woman-beekeeping connection was forbidden, the dipole bee - (chaste) woman received remarkable theological dimensions and a particular dogmatic background in early Christian patriarchal literature, influenced by another fallacy concerning the scientific ignorance of bee breeding; it was believed that bees did not copulate and that they remained virgin even after their (unknown then) way of reproduction.[14] Such a quality was allegorically exploited by two principal representatives of patristic theology, in the Latin literature by Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, and in the Orthodox by Proclos, Patriarch of Constantinople. Both compared the inherently arisen bees' chastity with the ideal of female virginity, by extension and implicitly with Theotokos. Saint Ambrose in his speech *Concerning Virginity* (I, 8.40, 41) exemplifies:

> Let, then, your work be as it were a honeycomb, for virginity is fit to be compared to bees… The bee feeds on dew, it knows no marriage couch, it makes honey. The virgin's dew is the divine word, for the words of God descend like the dew…How I wish you, my daughter, to be an imitator of these bees, whose food is flowers, whose offspring is collected and brought together by the mouth. Do imitate her, my daughter…

Likewise had said holy Augustine:

> Creator, who was able to create them without parents, and who was able to form the body of Christ in a virgin's womb, and who, to speak now to the unbelievers themselves, was able to grant progeny to bees without intercourse…

(*On Marriage and Sexuality. The Good of Marriage*: chapter 2). Both hierarchs have been considered as the authors of the Latin hymn *Exultet*, which included *Apis Laum* (The Praise of the Bees), where Virgin Mary is compared to the chaste bee.[15]

Proclus, as the majority of the hierarchs of his period, dealt particularly with the virginity of Theotokos, which was, amongst others, a flaming dogmatic issue of that time. In a speech-praise for Holy Mary, Proclus compares wax and honey to virginity.[16] However, in the Orthodox Church there has been no further evolution of this symbolism, nor do we know of any other hierarch who directly used the symbolism of the supposed chastity of the bee with Theotokos, and therefore with the virtuous woman. There is only

one notable verse of the Akathist Hymn (11.16–17) where there is an indirect connotation to Virgin Mary and the bee product, the honey: "Hail to you from whom flows milk and honey".[17]

On the contrary, the Latin West has been more "daring," probably under the influence of the Exultet hymn, as this particular bee-Holy Mary metaphor has even been visualised: typical such examples are the three depictions of the hymn *Apis Laum* The Praise of the Bees, where at the birth of Jesus Christ hives are located with honeycombs hanging inside them and bees around them.[18] A similar theological character is exuded through an early (dated about 1200) Galician Hymn to the Virgin where an alleged couple of beekeepers discovered the Divine Communion, personified as Theotokos and infant Christ, hidden in a hive.[19]

Thus, when Christianity was established, the following contradiction was imposed as for the relationship of women-bees-beekeeping: on the one hand, the ideal female patterns were symbolically designated as bees, with the comparison in the holy face of Theotokos being the culmination of it. On the other hand, they were emphatically forbidden to engage in honey harvesting. To the best of our knowledge, there is no source of the Middle Byzantine period, secular, or at least, religious, which repeated the allegory of the bee-woman ideal or prevented the woman from engaging in beekeeping. A significant exception is the agricultural treatise *Geoponica* dated in the first half of the 10th century, which is, though, a compilation of ancient sources ascribed to Cassianos Bassos who lived in the 6th century. In an outlined way it is stated that bees are annoyed when approached by women, especially those who have previously come into intercourse:

> They indeed become unmanageable at the approach of human creatures, and they fall upon them, and they are more severe on such as smell of wine, and of perfume; and they fall upon women, especially upon such as are of an amorous complexion.
>
> (XV, 2.19)

This chapter was written by Florentine, who lived in the 3rd century AD. Therefore, it makes it doubtful that it can be in line with the social and labour standards of the Middle Byzantine era. Evidently, however, it could not be so contradictory and far from that the "mores and customs" of that time that the chapter had to be adapted to.

Equally scarce, limited and ambiguous in their content are the depictions of women in Byzantine beekeeping scenes. They regard essentially two manuscript miniatures, one in the scroll of the Latin hymn *Exultet* Pisa 2 (1070–1100) and the other in the Byzantine codex of the story of *Job* Parisinus graecus 135, folio 145v (1362). The miniature in the first manuscript depicts a beekeeper harvesting honeycombs from the hives and behind him two other men tasting and commenting on the harvest. Next to them but with the back turned to them and the apiary's hives, a figure, whose appearance

Figure 4.1 Woman exercising 'forbidden' husbandry activities such as cow milking, probably also honey harvesting. Manuscript miniature, Book of Job, Par. gr. 135, folio 145v, Mistras (?), 1361/2 (©National Library of France, manuscripts collection).

and clothing is different, wearing a maphorion, and identified as a woman. She seems to be offering a part of the honey production to a sitting man.[20] The depiction is not similar to other *Exultet* beekeeping scenes, and the insertion of the episode between the woman and the sitting man has not been sufficiently interpreted. It is, however, the only one in which there is, even indirectly, a female presence in *Apis Laum* and the honey harvest in general.

The woman illustrated in the other Byzantine manuscript has a similar attitude: she is milking a cow and a man next to her is milking a sheep. Both have their backs turned to three beehives, a bee smoker and a vessel used rather for honeycomb collection (**Figure 4.1**).[21] The fact that these two vessels are included in the scene is of key importance as it implies that this is not just an outdoor livestock depiction but a representation of an actual beekeeping activity. This extremely interesting miniature is perhaps an indication of female "labour liberation," as both milking and beekeeping were considered purely male tasks.[22] However, it has certainly been pointed out in the previous bibliography the distinctive "western" character of the manuscript;[23] scenes demonstrating milking by women were not rare in Western Medieval iconography. On the other hand, it seems that such imagery would not be unfamiliar, nor would it be prohibited, according to the Byzantine ideological bias of that period. In reality, it is likely that they would have been occupations committed by Byzantine female farmers.[24]

The above depictions confirm that over centuries, women could probably be present and assist, but not be actually active in the honey harvest. The miniature painting of *Job* Par. gr. 135 suggests that beekeeping was included in a woman's domestic – but not professional – occupations. This would not be far from the reality of that time, especially in terms of rural settlements and female monasteries. Housewife-farmers and nuns would oversee and

Figure 4.2 A woman beekeeper attacked by bees while handling hive, being in despair caused by a bear's destruction of honey production. Manuscript miniature, Dioscorides (Tractatus de Herbis), folio 92r, France, 1400 (©Estense Universitaria Library, Modena).

maintain apiaries both in the Byzantine East and in the Medieval West, where references are available from an early age. In Western art, female beekeepers are believed to be first depicted accompanying their mates perhaps as early as the late 13th century. However, the depiction of a single woman exclusively responsible for honey harvesting is not to be found in artistic imagery earlier than the 15th century; two illuminating images, one in a French *Dioscorides* (*Tractatus de Herbis*) from 1400, and the other in the Flemish manuscript *The Pontifical of Saint Mary* Ms. 400, of 1438–1460 or circa 1450.

In the first manuscript, a woman beekeeper is depicted trying to protect herself from the bees while handling hives (**Figure 4.2**).[25] She is wearing a white headband: however she is not protected from the bee stings. The figure is attributed very feminine in the facial and physical characteristics, also appears to be young of age, reminiscent of the standard examples of the inexperienced people being attacked by bees. If the animal under the beehives is a bear, this may depict the young beekeeper's despair at finding her harvest destroyed and the consequent irritability and aggressiveness of the bees. Bears, as widely known, were a serious threat to hives, causing destruction to the stored honey.

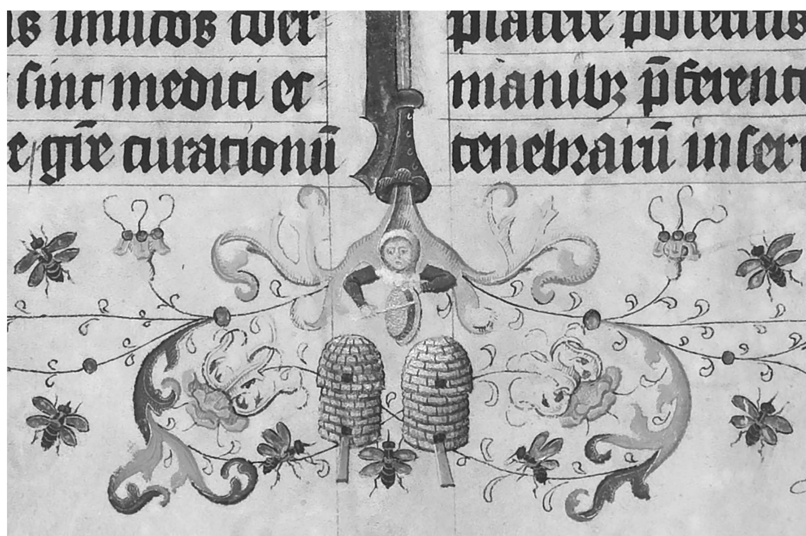

Figure 4.3 A woman beekeeper tanging drums, exercising an ancient and popular beekeeping practice. Manuscript miniature, the Pontifical of Saint Mary, MS 400, folio 14v, Flandres, 1438–1460 (©University Library, Utrecht Special collections).

In the second miniature, a woman is beating a drum, exercising the ancient, popular practice of tanging – a means of gathering or settling down the swarm into the hive (**Figure 4.3**).[26] Although the face of the young woman is bare, her head and arms are covered by a hood and long sleeves. It should be noted that this image is quite bold and exceptional because the beekeeping practice is used here to express theological concepts; the beehives and the bees probably serve as a symbol of the Immaculate Conception, reminding of the images at the Galician manuscript of 1200 and the three *Exultet* rolls that depict the Birth of Christ with beehives and bees around the central religious scene (see endnote 15).

With all the material now gathered and main perceptions represented, it becomes essential to clarify that lack of bee-related depictions (and texts) shall not lead necessarily to the assumption of female bee-workers absence in the cultures examined. Female labour in the fields or with livestock was considered "menial" and certainly far from inspiring art and literature of the past patriarchal societies. On the other hand, current Byzantine scholarship has not abided by stereotypes and showcased that when it comes to female peasantry, certain aspects such as apprenticeship, disconnection from husbands' work space, the possibility of a skilled, technical, stable employment with (an even lower) wage claim could not be far from reality of women active in rural settings. Women, after all, may however reluctantly have gained access to various working opportunities in the fields, "with or without their men, within or beyond their houses." However, that was

not without severe "ethical" risk; breaking the "codes" of allotted gender spaces was equivalent of letting themselves subject to (sexual, commonly) harassment – and that was a tremendously high price to pay for claiming a little of independence.[27] Was this also a commonplace for female beekeepers? For the time being, we can be certain that they were indeed part of this general perception of Byzantine "rural gender setting."

Meanwhile, from the 16th century, through early publications in the West, the image of the female ruler of the hive started being recognised, although in a conventional context. Ancient Greek sources, hierarchs and theological texts of early Christian times as well as medieval hymns had already referred to a "queen bee."[28] With the evolution of scientific data on beekeeping and the overall socio-ideological changes of the following centuries, it seems that the traditional exclusion of women from the participation in beekeeping was abolished, as there are many depictions and texts that relate women to beekeeping, especially in western and central Europe.[29] Many factors contributed to this change, from the 13th century onwards and more prominently in the West. The growing importance of livestock products in the development of economy, the evolution of farming techniques, and the consequent need for responsibilities' distribution affected the social and labour status of women.

Subsequently, the spectrum of the woman's occupation outside the limits of the household apparently spread to fields previously considered banned by intellectuals. Nevertheless, their professional-manufacturing management remained still and was conducted by "men's hands." The same would be the case, to the extent that it has been investigated, for the Post-Byzantine rural societies.[30] Despite the fact that in the western medieval societies pictorial and written sources highlight a greater mobility of women in livestock chores, especially in beekeeping, the strong-rooted patriarchal structures in both the Byzantium and the West were still conservatively opposed to or even rejected their skills, pleading prejudice, religious demonisation, and traditional customs.[31] An odd phenomenon, after all, regarding the "liaison" between women and beekeeping is noticed; it remained in theory banned but in practice solid and vivid.

It is interesting to identify, even through briefly but revealing, the extent to which this "gender apicultural taboo" has been eradicated or survived in pre-industrial societies (until the early 20th century) through ethnographic tradition. In regions of Greece, for example, beekeeping was still considered a male profession and women's involvement was still limited to side-by-side, supporting tasks such as covering the beehives with manure or cleaning the apiary.[32] The same was applied even in grape harvesting for wine production in some island communities and that was indeed intriguingly parallel to the ban on honey harvest.[33] It seems though that these prejudices did not last that long; a unique photographic documentary of 1925 depicts Eleni Prifti, member of an eminent landowners' family of Spata in eastern Attica, proudly "posing" next to a traditional skep, holding a smoker (**Figure 4.4**).

Figure 4.4 Eleni Prifti, member of a local wealthy family of eastern Attica (Spata), posing in front of a woven wither basket-beehive, holding a smoker. Photograph, Spata, Attica, 1925 (©Spata Educational Association "Friends of Education").

The addition of the smoker is the detail that makes the difference (see in accordance with figure 3), as it implies that the female figure was practicing the smoking of the bees and subsequently, the honey harvest, overturning centuries-old stereotypes.

In the second half of the century, even within the boundaries of conservative communities such as villages of central Greece and southern Italy, we barely witness to an instance of female "beekeeping emancipation": a woman teacher teaches the microcosm inside a hive to students (**Figure 4.5**), while a female farmer triumphantly carries a rectangular wooden hive on her head (**Figure 4.6**). Contrast to the above-mentioned photographic evidence, it is worth pointing out that in the underdeveloped, rural sub-Saharan African communities, to date, women's participation in honey harvesting is still of blame, men still abstain from intercourse before opening hives, when at the same time metaphysical ideas about honey and its production are still associated with female deities.[34]

The above rudimentary approach on the beekeeping-woman relationship, especially in the frame of Byzantine-Medieval culture and era, allow

Figure 4.5 Woman teacher of primary school exhibiting the inner of a beehive. Photograph, Rahula, Karditsa, central Greece, mid 20th century or little after (©Rahula Educational Association).

us to make no solid conclusions but just to draw some findings. Perhaps the most interesting of them is that through the paradox of identifying the bee with the chaste woman and in a wider sense with Virgin Mary, excluding at the same time the sexually active women from honey harvesting (for example the term "(women's) amorous complexion" of the *Geoponica*), conceals a stereotype of an over-conservative, oppressed female sexuality. Did the opening of the hives and the cutting of the honeycombs into highly prejudiced-obsessive, fatally patriarchal-societies function symbolically and figuratively as defloration, an allegory of the act of copulating? And that, even when the insect was considered by nature a sexual, ever-virgin? Such psychoanalytic approaches may be used as tools to interpret collective, social subconscious, even related to this peculiar, inter-temporal and intercultural complex. Perhaps its fight and later, targeted neglect or even disuse, by the Byzantine or medieval farmers-housewives gave them the opportunity to move into fields (agricultural and livestock activities), beyond the traditional household and next to men, enjoying after all and eventually more "gender independence."[35]

Figure 4.6 Woman carrying a wooden hive on her head. Photograph, Tornareccio, central Italy, mid 20th century or little after (©Apicoltura Luca Finocchio).

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32 D. Kyrou, Η μελισσοκομία στην οικονομία και τον καθημερινό βίο της Αρναίας σε παλαιότερες εποχές, *The Bee and Its Products. Conference Proceedings*, Piraeus Group Cultural Foundation: Athens 2000, 374, 377.

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5 Eve at the forge

Byzantine women and manual labour. Comments on a rare iconographical theme and its connection to reality

Konstantina Gerolymou

For reasons that have already been noted in several studies, the working life of Byzantine women from the lower social classes remains rather "illegible."[1] The present article deals with this particular topic, as it focuses on one aspect of these nameless women's activities, which, based on the stereotypical image that accompanies it, is linked with the artisanal occupations regarded as "masculine." My starting point is two pieces of iconographic evidence, of different types, provenances, and dates, which are related to depictions of scenes from the Old and New Testaments that show either Adam and Eve or a pair of artisans working in a forge. These depictions are rare in Byzantine and Medieval art. Even though they appeared in several publications, there is still a field for further analysis from the scope of Gender Studies. Especially, the presence of Eve as an archetypical figure of the ordinary woman who practices a hard work that is usually considered as a "male" occupation, highlights even more the importance of the representation and its connection with the volume in hand.

Beyond the inherent interest of these depictions as special cases in the context of Byzantine iconography,[2] the extent to which the image, despite its symbolic content, may ultimately refer to the reality of the activity affords equal interest. This is a standard and recurring problem of the Byzantine iconography and this is why the respective information should be dealt with prudence.

If we regard individual pictorial details of this scene, such as garments or tools, as realistic elements,[3] how certain can we be that the same is true for a woman's presence in the smithy? Taking the testimony of these illustrations as my starting point, I will attempt at the same time to assemble the sparse and scattered written sources from different chronological periods which relate to women's involvement in metalworking.[4] My aim is to present one aspect of the working reality of the ordinary woman, who over time was the least prominent member of each community's production process.

The first piece of iconographic evidence comes from the Old Testament and is linked to the Genesis Cycle.[5] In accordance with the divine punishment that followed the expulsion of the first human beings from the Garden

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of Eden, Eve is depicted working alongside Adam and the two of them laboring hard to survive by the sweat of their brows, seeking repentance through hard toil (*Genesis* 3:16–19). The usual iconography of the scene portrays Adam cultivating the land and Eve spinning or, less often, them working together, harvesting or digging the earth.[6] Adam and Eve are represented as members of a purely agrarian-pastoral society, dependent exclusively on the land that provides them with nourishment as well as the basic materials to ensure clothing to cover their nakedness (in reality and symbolically). Nonetheless, in some rare depictions they are represented not as farmers, but as craftsmen plying the blacksmith's trade.[7] It might perhaps be argued that this work is equally related to agricultural occupations, since during the Byzantine period the main job of blacksmiths was to make and repair agricultural implements. These artisans are referred to in texts as "smiths," "iron-cutters," "ironworkers," "copper-workers," "coppersmiths, or "tinkers" (*komodromoi*), a term denoting their constant journeying between settlements to repair the villagers' agricultural tools.[8] Moreover, it was not uncommon for farmers to occupy themselves occasionally with metalworking, as happened for example in monastic communities.[9] On the other hand, the inclusion of this particular activity in the Genesis cycle may be related to the idea that the day after the Fall also marks the beginning of culture and human progress through the invention of the arts.[10] Besides, the broader category of metalworkers includes not only those who manufactured tools and weapons, but also the makers of gold and silver objects –jewellery and coins – testifying to the importance of metallurgy in the Byzantine economy.[11]

The depictions of Adam and Eve working in a forge occur exclusively on bone plaques that once adorned luxurious boxes with scenes from Genesis, were made in Constantinople between the early 11th and 12th centuries.[12] The plaque in the Metropolitan Museum depicts a standing Adam beating metal on an anvil as he holds the tongs and hammer in his hands, with Eve kneeling at his right holding a bellows to fan the fire (**Figure 5.1**).[13]

On the remaining bone boxes, the figures are represented seated in the opposite positions, with Eve on the left of the scene, while between them rises a tree, symbolizing the tree of knowledge (**Figure 5.2**), or a smaller seated figure holding a money pouch, a personification of Wealth according to the accompanying inscription.[14] The explanation for the presence of the Genesis cycle, and this specific scene in particular, on these boxes has been sought in the context of the purpose they served: most likely as wedding gifts intended for the safekeeping of precious metal objects (jewellery, coins). At the same time, the couple's joint labour and toil were featured as the means for them to achieve progress and well-being.[15] This particular artisanal activity was probably chosen because iron working, as a trade exemplifying heavy, undesirable work that the Byzantines considered brutishly lower-class,[16] emphatically showed the "hard graft" that Adam and Eve and, by extension, the new married couple had to put in after their expulsion from Eden. A

Figure 5.1 Adam and Eve at the forge. Panel from an ivory box (casket), early 11th century (©Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York).

Figure 5.2 Adam and Eve at the forge. Ivory casket 11th–12th centuries (©Cleveland Museum of Art).

secondary reason may be to stress the contribution of women to the daily struggle to improve the family's lot by their participation in all types of work, even the more difficult and arduous ones. In this sense, these scenes exhibit a somewhat feminist character that seems strange for the period. At the same time, might the latter perhaps reflect the transformation of perceptions that occurred within Byzantine society during the period they were made, when some faint signs of equality began to appear between the two sexes?[17]

Individual details of the composition, such as differences that have been detected in the depiction of the figures' clothing and in the way Eve's hair is rendered, are highlighted not for their allegorical dimension but in the context of tracing elements that equate the two sexes who are engaged in the same work. On the plaque in the Metropolitan Museum, Eve wears a short tunic, decorated at the neck, with rolled-up sleeves, that is tied at the waist with a wide belt. Her hair falls softly over her back and is covered by a kerchief tied low at the back of her head. In contrast, on all the other boxes her hair is rendered long, curling, and free to frame her face, while the figures' clothing is not differentiated based on sex, since they both wear simple, unadorned tunics and boots. Viewed theologically, the clothing that God gave the expelled couple (*Genesis* 3:21) is understood as clothing of punishment. The same holds true for the tunic, which was work-wear *par excellence*.[18] Whether the identical clothing of Adam and Eve as artisans reflects a desire for equality between the sexes, at least in the eyes of the recipients of these particular gifts, is uncertain, but the workers' tunics, with their rolled-up sleeves, certainly offer a realistic glimpse into a working forge.

Conversely, was Eve's long, uncovered hair perceived exclusively as an indicator of feminine vanity, and thus as an allusion to the natural provocativeness of women,[19] or is it possible that it was also viewed in connection with the everyday image of working women? It is noteworthy that on another plaque of the same period and technique in the Metropolitan Museum, where Adam and Eve are depicted as farmers, Eve also has her head uncovered.[20] If, in the case of the New York plaque, the covered head alludes to the modest woman, submissive to the rules of a male-dominated world (and therefore corresponds to the reality of the times), why could the same not be claimed for the other plaques from the same period? In other words, might the absence of a head covering reflect a woman's habit in practice, indeed at the very moment when, at work inside a workshop (most likely belonging to a family enterprise) she was perhaps not always required to cover her head anyway? In the same way, moreover, women in the miniatures of illuminated manuscripts who are performing various activities in the home or outdoors sometimes have their hair uncovered.[21] So the way they were rendered might possibly have been based on a variety of parameters, such as iconographic models (mainly), the individual symbolism of the scene, and possibly the artist's personal preference based on a woman's (not completely obligatory) daily routine.[22]

Figure 5.3 Forging the nails for the Cross. Wall-painting, Zemen Monastery, Bulgaria, second half of the 14th century (by permission of the publisher Plamen Sabev).

The second piece of iconographic evidence relates to the New Testament and comes from monumental painting, specifically from the katholikon (principal church) of the monastery of Zemen in Bulgaria, dated to the second half of the 14th century (**Figure 5.3**).[23] The depiction of the Crucifixion in the main church also contains a secondary event, not mentioned in religious texts or in the Gospel narratives of the Crucifixion, that makes its first appearance in Western popular literature at the beginning of the 13th century. It is a representation of a forge where the blacksmith and his wife manufacture the nails for Jesus's cross.[24] According to this story, the Jews turned to a blacksmith to forge the three nails for the cross, but he, being an adherent of the new religion, refused, pretending to be incapable or have injured his hand. When he was asked to show it, the hand miraculously appeared to be leprous or disfigured. His wife immediately responded to their request and began to hammer the metal herself.

This incident clearly works to undermine the woman's character, giving her negative features such as harshness, lack of scruples, and disobedience

to her husband. Her character gradually evolves through different variations of the original work, in which she appears more and more invidious, showing a special hatred for Christ, with an insolent, domineering attitude to her husband. In the older texts, the woman has no specific name but is referred to in French as *la male vieille*, while from the 15th century on, she answers to different names (Maragonde, Grumaton, Malembouchee, Hédroit, Ysaulde).[25]

In the Zemen fresco, the blacksmith at the left of the scene is depicted kneeling on the ground holding a pair of tongs in his hand. He is represented in a simple long tunic and boots, while his forked beard recalls the more specific features of portraiture. Opposite him sits his wife, holding bellows with both hands. She wears a long, monochrome tunic with a decorative white collar, boots like her husband's, and has her head uncovered, with her hair bound low on her neck. In front of her, the furnace can be discerned, and beside her the wooden apparatus for operating the bellows. Behind this pair of iron workers, at a smaller scale, two more workmen beating iron on an anvil complete the picture of the workshop. This depiction constitutes the sole example of this particular episode in monumental wall painting in both Eastern and Western art.[26] The earlier Old Testament iconographic subject was used to illustrate this scene, with the smith and his wife replicating the figures of Adam and Eve as they are rendered on the plaques of the bone boxes mentioned above.[27] That this scene exists in the Zemen frescoes is not surprising, since they are distinguished generally for their archaic features and, at the same time, for a love of depicting vignettes from daily life and in pictorial details that demonstrate the painter's desire to include elements of the real world.[28]

In Western art, the same incident, which appears exclusively in the miniatures of 14th century illuminated manuscripts, is rendered in a different way: the pair of artisans is shown standing up, with only the woman hammering the metal (**Figure 5.4**).[29] In certain more recent versions, the smith is in fact missing completely.[30] Western miniaturists were consequently creating the scene anew, faithfully following the texts of different versions of the story examined here. In contrast, the anonymous painter of the Zemen frescoes used the iconographic prototype of the older Eastern tradition in which he broadly sought his inspiration. Nevertheless, he knew the story through works of western popular literature, to which it is not inconceivable that he had access, since the Bulgarian state, at its peak during the same period, did not lack commercial contacts with the West.[31]

Even though the way in which the metalworking tools are rendered is traditional and fairly schematic,[32] the depiction of the mechanism for operating the bellows is particularly interesting. The later depictions are distinguished from those of the older bone plaques, bearing witness to the technological changes that had occurred in the meantime. In medieval Europe, double bellows that hung from an upright wooden apparatus were used, which ensured their more efficient operation.[33]

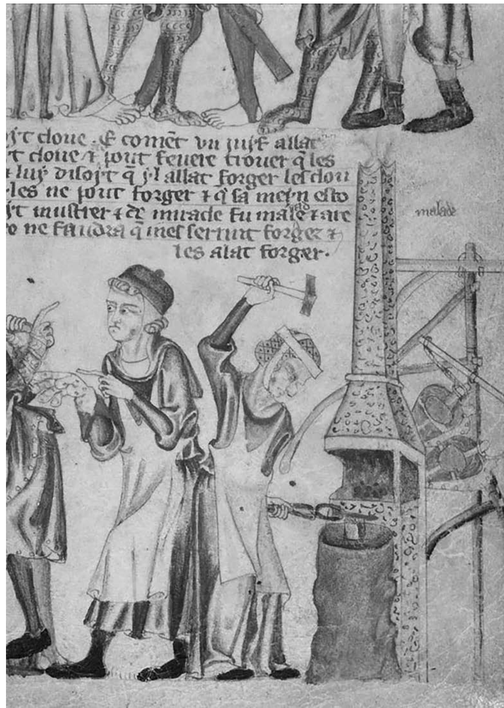

Figure 5.4 Forging the nails for the Cross. Manuscript miniature, Holkham Bible, circa 1327–1335 (©British Library Board, London).

The woman at Zemen copies Byzantine iconography in regard to her pose, but she is utilizing the most modern bellows (which would however have required her body to assume a different posture), either because Western models were being imitated or most likely because similar bellows were being used during the 14th century also in the Balkan region. Moreover, many mines are known to have operated in Bulgaria during the Byzantine era and metalworking was developed, particularly after the later 11th century. Also, after the transformation of Turnovo into the capital of the new Bulgarian state (1186), iron and copper production constituted one of the population's most important occupations, which continued even in the post-Byzantine period.[34] The fresco decoration of Zemen, consequently renders the image – familiar to the people of the area – of a metal workshop with the division of labour within it, where most likely all the members of a family were involved in its operation, if we also consider the smaller figures at the back of the scene as its children.

We are not in a position to know whether the icon painter was at the same time aware of the deeper conceptual link between the blacksmith's wife and Eve, situated as it is in their common lack of obedience to their husbands

and their rejection of God's commands,[35] and deliberately chose the older iconographic model to emphasize it. Furthermore, it cannot be ruled out that this particular scene was included because of some specific intention to stress reprehensible female behaviour. In this case, its appearance in a men's religious community might perhaps be more easily explained.[36]

Looking at the corresponding representations in Western manuscripts, we find that women occupy a more equal position in the workshop. If in Eastern Byzantine art her role appears mainly auxiliary, limited as it is to tending the fire, here she seems to be engaged even in the more grueling task of forging the metal. Furthermore, according to the episode's back-story, the woman is the one who finally undertakes to make the nails. This detail could be interpreted using different approaches: firstly, it might be taken as placing greater emphasis on the woman's negative characteristics, as it appears in any case to have been the story's original intent. Could it perhaps also reflect a tendency towards greater female empowerment and equality of work, which may have been consistent with the conditions prevailing in the society of the Western Middle Ages? Or did precisely these changes and the new status that women were gradually assuming constitute the occasion for creating and reproducing this particular scene, through which was found scope for expressing the misogyny of a world dominated by men?[37]

A pair of blacksmiths in a forge is also appears in a different sort of text, in a scene from the miniatures accompanying the illuminated 14th century *Liber astrologiae* by Georgius Fendulus.[38] The miniaturist's inspiration was most likely well-known and copied the scenes in the same work. The fact that, in this particular text, the scene is not freighted with the symbolism inherent in the Crucifixion story may show that it can also be viewed differently (free of misogynistic/derogatory perceptions), and that the picture of a woman plying this trade was not unknown at that period.[39] In addition, as we know from mediaeval tax rolls, in 13th century Paris were two women nail-makers, three farriers, an armouress, an iron monger, a cutler, three pin makers, a locksmith, and a *haubergiere* (or "*haubergere*", a female maker of hauberks or coats of mail), all trades requiring specialized technical skills and training.[40]

That women were involved in certain of these trades cannot be excluded; the circumstance would have been to some degree both diachronic and supra-local. After all, the oldest available written sources concerned with women's involvement in metalworking already come from the Roman period. Thus, we know that at Augusta Taurinorum (modern Turin) Cornelia Venusta applied the trade of nail-maker (*clavarius/clavaria*) together with her husband,[41] while the Edict of Diocletian included women in its references to beaters of gold leaf (*brattiarii/brattiariae / artifex brattias faciens*)[42] and silversmiths (*argentarii/argentariae*).[43] In almost all these instances, the women were freeborn.[44] During the Early Byzantine period, the only relevant evidence concerns female goldsmiths.[45] Given that at that time earlier Roman attitudes to female labour do not appear to have changed radically,

however, continuity in these professions is not out of the question, depending on the case. For the later period, nonetheless, the single testimony from written sources for a woman's involvement with metallurgy is the case of the nun Nymphodora, who in the 15th century used two "working wheels" with male partners for the casting or perhaps processing of ore in the area of Sidirokausia (modern Stagira) in the Chalkidiki peninsula.[46]

During the Byzantine and Post-Byzantine periods, women are known not to have been prohibited from assisting their husbands in the exercise of their professions. On the other hand, each woman's manual labour in practice conformed to her socio-economic situation and place of residence and consequently was not closed to women of the lower social strata. The division of labour by class could be observed even within female monastic communities, where the poorer nuns undertook the manual tasks.[47] Accordingly, a similar occupation, useful but nonetheless grueling, might well be undertaken by a lower-class woman – the wife of a craftsman – in the present case, of a metalworker. Among the Byzantine sources, however, instances of cooperation between spouses are known only for trades such as tavern owner, butcher shop owner, and trader.[48] The reference to the related craft profession of female coppersmith ("*chalkissa*"), which was likely considered a family surname, may constitute an analogous case.[49] The precise role of women and their degree of involvement in communal labour cannot be determined: whether, for example, it was purely ancillary as viewed from the standpoint of stereotypes about women, or completely active, if not equivalent. On the other hand, a woman's employment in a workshop did not necessarily signify her continual exposure to the community (since in this period living and working for the most part coexisted within the family unit),[50] even more so given that smithies were usually located in more remote parts of cities. During the Byzantine period too, the model of the adaptive family which has been proposed for pre-industrial Europe could possibly be applied, but as has been argued, it does explain the situation that prevailed in earlier periods as well, for instance Roman times, and is based on the idea that a family's communal labour can increase its economic well-being.[51]

In the light of the depiction of a woman in a iron working shop, Mati Meyer proposes the possibility that it reflects the practice of recruiting women as workforce even at this very early period.[52] Nonetheless, women appear more likely to have been recruited from the middle and especially the upper classes as staff for particular domestic or rural jobs, and less often for employment in a metalworking shop. Metalworkers normally belonged to a lower income class and would have difficulty maintaining additional workers. In any comparable case, it seems more likely that male craftsmen would have been chosen instead for social, ideological, or practical reasons (muscular strength). If, on the other hand, the forge was a family concern, the participation of all family members, not excepting women, made sense, in as much as it secured some savings in operating expenses. Moreover, as Byzantine and post-Byzantine textual sources report, instances of women

being hired as staff for certain tasks are associated with wealthier employers or the state itself.[53]

In conclusion, it makes sense that every woman who did not have the economic means at her disposal and was not subject to the social restrictions of her class could have been led to undertake even more demanding manual work in order to contribute to the family's viability. Her participation in more technical, "unfeminine" tasks, such as those in a smithy, is more likely to have occurred in the context of such family businesses. Consequently, beyond any symbolic character they possess, the rare depictions presented here at the same time capture a likeness which, even if not commonplace, was surely not unknown to people at the time they were created.

The fact also that in Byzantine art women are not depicted practicing any other heavy, "male" works (e.g. masonry or carpentry), but are merely represented carrying out agricultural or artisanal tasks, such as blacksmithing, may be indicate that the scene with the woman in forge corresponds in some extend to reality. Even if women were only assisting the family business and their role in the production process was restricted, their participation in such an activity, adds a further task to their multiple duties (wife, housewife, mother, farmer, etc.). Women performing heavy work seem more dynamic and "independent" in a way, so that the existing stereotypes about their role and their actual status may be treated with greater skepticism.

Notes

1 For female labour in Byzantium, see for example F. Koukoules, *Vie et civilization byzantines*, vol. B/1, Institut Français d'Athènes, Papazisis: Athens 1955, 232–235 (in Greek). A. Laiou, The Role of Women in Byzantine Society, *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 31/1(1981), 241–249. E. Margarou, *Titles and Professional Names of Women in Byzantium: A Contribution to the Study of the Status of Women in Byzantine Society*, Center for Byzantine Research: Thessaloniki 2000, 18–19, 139–141, 148, 207–258 (in Greek, summary in English). M. Fulghum Heintz, Work: The Art and Craft of Earning a Living, I. Kalavrezou (ed.), *Byzantine Women and Their World*, Harvard University Art Museums: Cambridge MA 2003, 139–159. M. Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou, La contribution de la femme à l' économie du Moyen Âge tardif (le cas de la filandrière serbe), *Eoa kai Esperia* 5(2001–2003), 147–177, at 150–166 (in Greek, abstract in French). K. Nikolaou, *The Woman in the Middle Byzantine Period. Social Models and Everyday Life in the Hagiographical Texts*, Monograph 6, National Hellenic Research Foundation-Institute of Historical Research: Athens 2005, 285–302 (in Greek). J. Herrin, *Unrivalled Influence: Women and Empire in Byzantium*, Princeton University Press: Princeton 2013, 97–101. S. E. J. Gerstel, *Rural Lives and Landscapes in Late Byzantium: Art, Archaeology, and Ethnography*, Cambridge University Press: New York – Cambidge MA 2015, 93–96. S. Germanidou, Illustrating Female Peasant Labour in Middle and Late Byzantine Iconography. Visual Pretexts Towards 'Gender Equality' or Depictions of 'Physical Subordination'? *Byzantion*

88(2018), 163–185. J. Lindblom, *Women and public space: social codes and female presence in the byzantine urban society of the 6th to the 8th centuries*, PhD thesis University of Helsinki: Helsinki 2019, 146–162. Cf. for Venetian Crete: A. Panopoulou, Working Indoors and Outdoors: Female Labour, Artisanal Activity and Retail Trade in Crete (14th–16th Centuries), E. Kountoura-Galaki – E. Mitsiou (eds), *Women and Monasticism in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean: Decoding a Cultural Map – Workshop Proceedings*, National Hellenic Research Foundation- Institute of Historical Research: Athens 2019, 207–232 (with comprehensive bibliography).

2 For the depictions in Byzantine iconography of ordinary women at work, see A. Dekazou, *Οι ατομικές τιμωρίες των αμαρτωλών στην παράσταση της Δευτέρας Παρουσίας στη βυζαντινή και μεταβυζαντινή μνημειακή ζωγραφική*, Ioannina 1998–1999, 40 (weaver), 67–68 (a giver of false weights), 111–112 (wine-seller) (online access). I. Kalavrezou, Women in the Visual Record of Byzantium, I. Kalavrezou (ed.), *Byzantine Women and Their World*, 13–21. M. Meyer, *An Obscure Portrait: Imaging Women's Reality in Byzantine Art*, The Pindar Press: London 2009, 116–225. A. G. Mantas, Presentations of the Household Chores of Women in Byzantine Art: A First Approach, M. Panayotidi-Kesisoglou (ed.), *Women in Byzantium. Worship and Art. Special subject of the 26th Symposium of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Archaeology and Art*, Piraeus Group Cultural Foundation: Athens 2012, 55–70 (in Greek, abstract in English). Germanidou, Illustrating Female Peasant Labor, 167–185, figures 1–7. A rare instance of a depiction of women from a secular context occurs in the scene of the procession for the icon of the Odigitria (Our Lady who Shows the Way) in the monastery church of Vlacherna at Arta (vegetable-seller, fruit-seller), see M. Acheimastou-Potamianou, *The Wall-Paintings of the Blacherna Convent in the Area of Arta,* The Archaeological Society at Athens: Athens 2009, 82–83, 193–194, figures 52, 55 and 229–230, figures 129, 133–134 (in Greek, summary in English).

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4 On the restrictions and methodological problems posed by using textual and visual sources as evidence for the daily life of Byzantine women see A. Kaldellis, The Study of Women and Children. Methodological Challenges and New Directions, P. Stephenson (ed.), *The Byzantine World*, Routledge: London – New York 2010, 61–171. Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou, La contribution de la femme, 150–152. Germanidou, Illustrating Female Peasant Labor, 164–165.

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6 Less often, Eve nurses an infant (for example in the Bible Moutier-Grandval, BL ADD Ms. 10546, folio 5v [http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_10546_f001r]), or simply sits pensively next to Adam (for example in the

Pantheon Bible, Vatican Library, Vat. lat. 12958, folio 4v [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.lat.12958]). Depictions of Eve helping Adam with agricultural tasks such as tilling and harvesting appear only on the early 11th century ivory panel in the Metropolitan Museum, Inventory Nr. 17. 190.138 [http:/www.metmuseum.org./art/collection/search/464019 (with references)], the Ripoll Bible (Vatican Library, Vat. lat. 5729, folio 6r, 11th century [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.lat.5729]), the Salerno ivory plaque (Horn, *Adam und Eva Erzählungen*, 188) and the 12th century frieze on the west façade of Modena Cathedral (M. F. Hearn, *Romanesque Sculpture: The Revival of Monumental Stone Sculpture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, Phaidon Press: New York 1981, 130, plate 63). For their labours generally, see V. Mavroska, *Adam and Eve in the Western and Byzantine art of the middle ages*, PhD thesis University of Frankfurt: Frankfurt 2009, 160–166.

7 For depictions of smiths and metalworking shops in Byzantine and Medieval art, see the 9th century codex Par. gr. 923, folio 335r (https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b525013124/f673.image) and Stuttgart Psalter, Cod. bibl. 23, folio 121r (http://digital.wlb-stuttgart.de/sammlungen/sammlungsliste/werksansicht/?id=6&tx_dlf%5Bid%5D=1343&tx_dlf%5Bpage%5D=249). N. Pyrrou, Healer and blacksmith: New evidence about Romanos the Sklepodioktis in the monunmental paintings of Crete, *Deltion of the Christian Archaeological Society* 52(2013), 167–178, at 173–174, figure 7 (In Greek, abstract in English) fresco of Saint Romanos the horse-healer in his workshop, in the church of Saint Fanourios at Valsamonero in Crete, second half of the 15th century). Cf. also the smith who worked on feast days, who is included in the punishments of individual sinners at the Last Judgement in the monastery of Gračanica (Serbia), early 14th century: M. Garidis, Les punitions collectives et individuelles des damnés dans le Jugement dernier (du XIIe au XIVe siècle), *Zbornik za likovne Umetnosti* 18(1982), 1–18, at 12.

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9 N. Svoronos, La vita in villagio, A. Guillou (ed.), *La Civilta Bizantina. Oggetti e messaggio: Architettura e ambiente di vita*, Corso di Studi VI - L' Erma di Bretschneider: Rome 1981, 307–308. Meyer, *An Obscure Portrait*, 224.

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11 M. Papathanassiou, Metallurgy and Metalworking Techniques, A. Laiou (ed.), *The Economic History of Byzantium. From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, vol. 1, Dumbarton Oaks: Washington D.C. 2002, 121–127, at 123–126.

12 A. Goldschmidt – K. Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen des X.–XIII. Jahrhunderts*, vol. 1, B. Cassirer: Berlin 1930, 46, 48–49, nr. 67, plate XLVIIIe (Cleveland Museum of Art, Inventory Nr. 1924.747), 49–50, nr. 68, plate XLIVd (Leningrad, Hermitage, Inventory Nr. 62), 50 nr. 69, plate L (Darmstadt, Landesmuseum, Inventory Nr. 63), 51, nrs 76–77, plate LI (Milan, Museo del Castello), 54–55, nr. 93, plate LV (New York, Metropolitan Museum, Inventory Nr. 17.190.139).

13 Metropolitan Museum of Art [http:/www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/464020 (with references)]. The iconographic prototype of the scene may be the Roman reliefs, mainly funerary, depicting metalworkers in their workshops, for example Aquileia, National Museum, Inventory Nr. 166 (G. Zimmer, *Römische Berufsdarstellungen*, Mann: Berlin 1982, 187, nr. 122). British Museum AN 1047418001 (Verboven – Laes, *Work, Labour and Professions*, 161, figure 8.5).

For a Byzantine metalworker's equipment and the names of his tools, see Koukoules, *Vie et civilization,* 217–220, 235, 239.

14 In the boxes from Cleveland [https://www.clevelandart.org/art/1924.747 (with references)] and Darmstadt (L. Bréhier*, La sculpture et des arts mineurs byzantins*, vol. 1, Éditions d' Art et de Histoire: Paris 1936, 76, vol. 2, plate XXXV, I.).

15 Goldschmidt – Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen*, 49. Kalavrezou, *Women in the Visual Record*, 19.

16 Koukoules, *Vie et civilization,* 221.

17 Laiou, The Role of Women, 258 cites remarks by Byzantine period scholars that convey a different but corresponding insight. Exemplifying this alternative insight are the words of Ioannis Apokaukos: "If anyone wishes to distinguish the male from the female sex without prejudice, he will find both sexes worthy of divine providence and apostolic care." A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, Συνοδικά γράμματα Ιωάννου του Αποκαύκου, *Byzantis* 1(1909), 3–30, at 14 and Dimitrios Chomatianos, regarding laws against adultery that punished the woman, not the man: "I do not accept this legislation, I do not commend the custom; the legislators were men, wherefore the legislation was against women." I. Pitra (ed.), *Analecta sacra et classica spicilegio Solesmensi parata*, vol. 6, apud Roger et Chernowitz: Paris 1891, column 116.

18 *LCI* 1, 45 (*PL* 107, 499). On ordinary work clothing and its terminology, see T. Dawson, Propriety, Practicality and Pleasure: the Parameters of Women's Dress in Byzantium, A.D. 1000–1200, L. Garland (ed.), *Women in Byzantium: Varieties of Experience, AD 800–1200,* Ashgate: Aldershot 2006, 41–76, at 50 and 59. Miniatures usually depict women performing agricultural tasks wearing long tunics with rolled-up sleeves: Germanidou, Illustrating Female Peasant Labor, 171.

19 Meyer, *An Obscure Portrait*, 224. On women's head coverings generally, see G. Radle, The Veiling of Women in Byzantium: Liturgy, Hair, and Identity in a Medieval Rite of Passage, *Speculum* 4/4(2019), 1070–1115.

20 Goldschmidt – Weitzmann, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, 54–55, nr. 92, plate LV (Inventory Nr. 17.190.138); the Ripoll Bible (Vatican Library, Vat. lat. 5729, f. 6r, 11th century [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.lat.5729]).

21 Florence, Laurentian Library, codex Plut. VI 23, folio 137v (ca. 1100); Venice, Marcian Library, Cynegetics of Pseudo-Oppian (mid or second half of 11th century), codex Marcianus Gr. Z139, folio 62r. Germanidou, Illustrating Female Peasant Labor, 167–168. Young unmarried women are often depicted with uncovered heads; for example, the girls standing on the gallery of a building in the scene of the procession of the Odigitria icon at the Blacherna monastery: Acheimastou-Potamianou, *Blacherna,* 86, figures 48–49.

22 For these alternative possibilities, see Mantas, Presentations of the household chores, 65, figure 9, and Kaldellis, The Study of Women, 66.

23 For the church (Saint John the Theologian) and this particular scene as part of the second phase of the wall paintings, which an extant dedicatory inscription records as the benefaction of an unnamed local magnate when that land was part of the estates of Deyan, Despot of Velbuzhd, see A. Grabar, *La peinture religieuse en Bulgarie,* vol. 2, Librairie orientaliste Paul Geuthner: Paris 1928, 186–223, plate XXX. A. Tschlingirov, *Die Kunst des christlichen Mittelalters in Bulgarien (4. bis 18. Jahrhundert*), Beck: Munich 1979, 67, 321–322. A. Boschkov, *Monumentale Wandmalerei Bulgariens*, F. Kupferberg: Mainz 1969, 56–57. V. Pace (ed.), *Treasures of Christian Art in Bulgaria*, Borina: Sofia 2001, 83–86. M. Hristova-Trifonova, *Zemen Monastery*, Borina: Sofia 2003, especially at 17.

24 This story, which first appears in the narrative poem *Passion des Jongleurs,* is preserved in several French and Anglo-Norman manuscripts and was later incorporated in various literary works (*Les lamentations de Matheolus*; *Le livre de Leesce, de Jehan Le Fèvre, de Ressons*, and others). The story was gradually

elaborated with burlesque elements and circulated until the mid-16th century: E. Lommatzsch, Die Legende von der Schmiedin der Kreuzesnägel Christi, *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie* 48/1(1928), 537–580. G. D. Schmidt, A Fell Woman and Full of Strife: The Legend of Hédroit, the Smith's Wife, *Medievalia* 11(1985), 47–61. P. Sabev, The Legends about Forging the Nails for Christ's Crucifixion (written sources and iconographic variations), *Proceedings of the Regional Museum of History, Veliko Tarnovo* 33(2018), 241–258, figures 1–6. (in Bulgarian, abstract in English).

25 L. R. Muir, *The Biblical Drama of Medieval Europe*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 1995, 134–135, nrs 41, 251–252. S. Mueller-Loewald, Quatre figures féminines apocryphes dans certains Mystères de la Passion en France, *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 28(2003), 173–183, at 173–174.

26 In the sculpture of the West, this episode appears only once, over the main entrance of Strasbourg Cathedral (1277–1291), but the Crucifixion scene represents only the blacksmith's wife, standing beside the Cross holding the nails: P. Ahnne, La Févresse Hédroit au portail de la cathédrale de Strasbourg, *Bulletin de la Société des amis de la Cathédrael de Strasbourg* 5(1939), 63–71. Schmidt, A Fell Woman, 55.

27 A conceptual connection between the two representations likely exists, to the extent that the scene from Genesis may prefigure Golgotha. On the other hand, Eve and the blacksmith's wife have certain features in common, as remarked above.

28 Tschlingirov, *Die Kunst des christlichen Mittelalters*, 321–322. Boschkov, *Monumentale Wandmalerei*, 56–57.

29 See Queen Mary's Psalter, Royal MS 2B VII, folio 252v (circa 1310–1320) (http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal_ms_2_b_vii_f001r) and the Holkham Bible, British Library MS 47682, folio 31r (circa 1320-1330) (http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_47682_fs001r).

30 In two French illuminated manuscripts, the female metalworker is identified with Hédroit: Jean Fouquet, *Livre d' heures pour Étienne Chevalier* (circa 1470) and *Pèlerinage de Jésus-Christ* (Paris, BNMS fr. 823, folio 226) (1393). E. Mâle, *L' art religieux de la fin du Moyen Âge en France*, Armand Colin: Paris 1925[3], 61 figures 32, 62.

31 Pace, *Treasures*, 86.

32 Whether the smith (the figure seated next to the anvil) is holding the special apparatus used to make nails in his tongs cannot be clearly discerned, see W.H. Manning, Blacksmithing, D. Strong – D. Brown (eds), *Roman Crafts*, Duckworth: London 1976, 151–152, figure 259: 'the nail-heading' tool was developed in the Roman period and remained in continuous use until the advent of machine-made nails in modern times.

33 They are similarly depicted in illuminated manuscripts (for example the Holkham Bible, British Library MS 47682, folio 31r, Sloane 3983, British Library, folio 5r [http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=sloane_ms_3983_fs001r]; the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, MS 132, folio 118v [http://ica.themorgan.org/manuscript/page/51/77345]), as well as in engravings and drawings of the 15th century, for example H.C. – L. H. Hoover, Georgius Agricola, *De Re Metallica,* Dover: New York 1950,translated from the 1555 editio princeps; Mendel *Hausbuch* I, Amb. 317.2° folios 35r, 47r, 114v [https://hausbuecher.nuernberg.de/75-Amb-2-317-35-r, & -47-r & -114-v]; Landauer I, Amb. 279.2° folio 21r [https://hausbuecher.nuernberg.de/75-Amb-2-279-21-r].

34 N. X. Nerantzis, *Byzantine and Ottoman mineral exploration and smelting in Eastern Macedonia, Greece and their implications for regional economies*, vol. 1, PhD thesis University of Sheffield: Sheffield 2009, 115–117, figures 4.5–4.6.

35 Schmidt, A Fell Woman, 58.

36 Divergences between the iconographic programmes of male and female religious houses: S. E. J. Gerstel, Painted Sources for Female Piety in Medieval Byzantium, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 52(1998), 89–111, at 90–91. Misogyny in monastic circles: N. Thierry – M. Thierry, *Nouvelles églises rupestres de Cappadoce. Région du Hasan Daği (Peristrema)*, C. Klincksiek: Paris 1963, 100. M. Vassilaki, Representations of Sinnful Women Damned in Hell in Cretan Painted Churches, *Archaeologia* 21(1986), 41–46, at 44–45.

37 For the status of women in the West and the gradual changes generally, see Laiou, "The Role of Women," 164–166; Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou, "Η συμμετοχή της γυναίκας," 162–166.

38 Georgius Fendulus, *Liber astrologiae,* MS. Sloane 3983, folio 5 (www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMINBig.ASP?size=big&IllID=720).

39 Also of interest is a depiction of another female figure working in a metalworking establishment that appears at the same time in the West. It is a symbolic representation of Nature (*Natura artifex*) and, by extension, of Eve as Life, mother of all (*Genesis* 3.20), as a woman who on the anvil shapes all living beings, present in illuminated manuscripts of the French 13th century novel *La Roman de la rose*. See, for example, the miniatures in Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, MS M132, f. 118v, (http://ica.themorgan.org/manuscript/page/51/77345) and MS G.32, f. 108r, (http://ica.themorgan.org/manuscript/page/57/76943) and in the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, Paris, Ms 1126, folio 115r (https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6000533s/f239.image). Indicative bibliography: H. Braet, *Nouvelle bibliographie du Roman de la Rose*, Peeters: Louvain 2017. C. McWebb, Lady Nature in Word and Image in Jean de Meun' s Roman de la Rose, *Digital Philology: A Journal of Medieval Cultures* 6/1(2017), 67–85. This figure is also associated with alchemy, to which metalworkers were particularly linked: Papathanassiou, Metallurgy, 123–124.

40 S. Roux, *Paris in the Middle Ages*, University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia 2009, 154.

41 *CIL* V, 7023. C. Holleran, Women and Retail in Roman Italy, E. Hemelrijkand – G. Woolf (eds), *Women and the Roman City in the Latin West*, Brill: Leiden – Boston 2013, 313–330, at 315.

42 *Brattiarii* / *brattiariae*: *Edict* 28.3, *CIL* VI, 6939, 9211.

43 *Argentaria*: *Edict* 28.10-12, *CIL* VI, 5184. See also M. Groen-Vallinga – L. Tacoma, The Value of Labour: Diocletian's Prices Edict, K. Verboven – C. Laes (eds), *Work, Labour, and Professions in the Roman World*, Brill: Leiden and Boston 2017, 104–132, at 131–132.

44 Except for the *clavaria* Cornelia Venusta in *CIL* V, 7023, a freed woman (*liberta*), and the *brattiaria* Fulvia Malena in *CIL* VI, 9211, whose legal status is uncertain.

45 E. Marki – E. Angelkou – M. Cheimonopoulou, Woman's Activities, Adornment and Costume in Early Christian World, Panayotidi-Kesisoglou, *Women in Byzantium*, 71–85, at 74 (in Greek, abstract in English).

46 J. Bombaire (ed.), *Actes de Xéropotamou*, Lethielleux: Paris 1964, 214, nr. 30, Line 33 (testament of the year 1445/6). These wheels most likely had to do with waterwheel systems, which were known already in the Roman period but appeared in western monastic communities from the late 13th century onward, signaling an important step forward in the mining and metallurgy sector: Nerantzis, *Byzantine and Ottoman mineral exploration*, 64, 78, 121, 124, 127 (about Siderokausia). Nerantzis, Using Mills to Refine Metals: Iron Smelting Technology of the Transitional Byzantine to Ottoman Period in Macedonia, Greece, T. Kienlinand – B. Roberts (eds), *Metals and Societies. Studies in Honour of Barbara S. Ottaway*, Verlag Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH: Bonn 2009, 443–451, at 444.

47 C. Galatariotou, Byzantine Women's Monastic Communities: The Evidence of the Typika, *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 38(1988), 263–290, at 269–277.

48 Laiou, The Role of Women, 158. K. Mentzou-Meïmari, Die Präsenz der Frau in der griechischen Inschriften vom 4.-11. Jahrhunderte , *Parousia* 1(1982), 232–253, at 241 (in Greek, abstract in German). Margarou, *Titles and Professional Names*, 227, 233, 250, 271, 272 Nikolaou, *The Woman in the Middle Byzantine Period*, 283, 286, 299, 307.

49 Margarou, *Titles and Professional Names*, 258 (documents from Athos).

50 The same conditions prevailed from the Roman period into the pre-industrial era: Holleran, Women and Retail, 317. For the West through the Late Middle Ages, see M.A. Pappano N.R Rice, Medieval and Early Modern Artisan Culture, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 43/3(2013), 473–485, at 474, 477.

51 Advocated by R. Wall, Work, Welfare and the Family: An Illustration of the Adaptive Family Economy, L. Bonfield – R. Smith – K. Wrightson (eds), *The World We Have Gained: Histories of Population and Social Structure: Essays Presented to Peter Laslett on his Seventieth Birthday*, Basil Blackwell: Oxford 1986, 261–294. Its implementation in the Roman period: Groen-Vallingaand Tacoma, The Value of Labour, 107.

52 Meyer, *An Obscure Portrait*, 225.

53 Laiou, The Role of Women, 158 (female agricultural workers on the estates of more affluent farmers). Margarou, *Titles and Professional Names*, 211, 229–231 (women weavers and workers in the silk industry; "*katartaries*" were those who unwound the silk from the cocoons and made it into thread), 237 (custodians/caretakers), 256–257 (nurses). A comparable case has been noted for the 16th century, but it involves women compelled to labour in the public salt pans of Venetian Crete: Panopoulou, Working Indoors and Outdoors, 225.

6 Female family status during the Late Byzantine period; evidence from MS Parisinus graecus 135

Eleni Barmparitsa

Two family dining scenes (folios 9v, 18v) from the well-known *Book of Job* from the National Library of France (Parisinus graecus 135), provide evidence of the appearance, status, and role of female family members during the Late Middle Ages (**Figures 6.1 and 6.2**). The two scenes are characterised by the variety of iconographic types of men and women and the numerous roles that emerge, which go beyond the standardised iconographic type found in the representation of dining scenes in Byzantine art.[1] Without attempting an exhaustive analysis of the matter, the two scenes feed, from a specific perspective, into the scientific research of the position and importance of women within the family during the Late Byzantine period.[2]

The manuscript was copied by Manuel Tzykandilis and, in all probability, produced in Mistra between 1361 and 1362.[3] It is an interesting hybrid of Byzantine and Western European cultural origins. The miniatures in the manuscript are generally thought to reflect the Western artistic tradition, especially due to the realistic depiction of physiognomic features, garments, and objects as well as the hierarchical organisation of the participants.[4] The manuscript was produced in the period during which Mistra was governed by the Despot Manuel Kantakouzinos (1349–1380) and his wife Isabella of Lusignan, who had family ties and maintained close relations with the Frankish house of Lusignan in Cyprus.[5] The influence of the Western European artistic tradition, found in the manuscript, may result both from the contacts with the Frankish Cyprus as well as from the Angevin dynasty that ruled the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and had extensive political and economic influence on the Peloponnese after 1267 (Treaty of Viterbo).[6] The Western artistic production began to spread across the Peloponnese over a century earlier, after the Fourth Crusade (1204), through the Principality of Achaia and the territorial conquests of Venice, which facilitated the actions of Latins with substantial political and economic influence.[7]

Our approach must first take into account the restrictions arising from the conventions of iconography.[8] They do however allow reality to be rendered to a certain extent, which is always important to identify and highlight with the appropriate methodological tools. For this manuscript, the detailed

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Figure 6.1 Family meal among Job's children, his seven sons and three daughters, according to the verse 1:4 of the Book of Job. Manuscript miniature, Book of Job, Par. gr. 135, folio 9v, 1361–62 (©National Library of France, Manuscripts collection).

Figure 6.2 Family meal among Job's children, his seven sons and three daughters, according to the verse 1:13 of the Book of Job. Manuscript miniature, Book of Job, folio 18v, 1361–62 (©National Library of France, Manuscripts collection).

documentation of each iconographic issue has already been established.[9] The penetrating look of the miniature painter offers a realistic insight into the detailed rendering of the plants and animals, clothes, weapons, tools, and architectural structures.

As the material chosen is limited in quantity and therefore geographically, socially, and chronologically, the study is a brief commentary on the crucial issue of inter-family relations across the Greek territory during the Late Middle Ages in terms of gender and family hierarchy. It concerns a particular region, the Despotate of Morea, from the 14th century to approximately 1460, when the region fell into the hands of the Ottomans. The study also focuses on the representation of meals in affluent households. This can be seen from the depiction of the architectural framework, which includes luxurious two-storey buildings, but also from the details of the dining experience (use of tablecloths, glass cups, various utensils, and the richness of the dishes).[10]

Late Byzantine sources rarely provide an opportunity to gain insight into inter-family relationships. The two miniatures of family banquets have been chosen because they touch on aspects of daily life that do not easily lend themselves to a commentary, since they are perhaps considered self-explanatory and ordinary, and for this reason they appear only occasionally in written and iconographic sources. The narrative character of the two scenes allows for multiple levels of interpretation. The manner that both men and women naturally conduct themselves according to their gender role expectations is revealed at a first level. Men have a predominant position and role at the table. They are depicted centrally using different scales according to their age. Women do not form a homogeneous group, raising the inevitable question of social difference and divergence among them.

The position of women within the family in the Byzantine period has captured the interest of researchers, particularly as part of broader studies on gender relations and the family institution.[11] The question of how women conducted themselves based on the expectations arising from their gender, and even the degree of acceptance and self-will they enjoyed in the context of the late Byzantine family, has multiple parameters and is difficult to apprehend. It depends on the woman's role, the family's economic situation and social status and even on the wife's contribution to their improvement through the dowry. Social norms, modes of thinking and psychological parameters are additional factors that shape inter-family relationships over time.[12]

The iconographic evidence provided by the two miniatures is interesting in terms of its details (**Figures 6.1 and 6.2**).[13] Both miniatures depict the same subject: two family meals among Job's children, his seven sons and three daughters, as described in the verses 1:4 and 1:13 of the *Book of Job*.[14] Thus in both miniatures the number and composition of the diners is the same. This is an interesting variation or addition to the iconography of the Byzantine family.[15] Although the two scenes illustrate the same subject and have

Figure 6.3 The old lady in the upper right part of the scene of the family meal in folio 9v. Manuscript miniature, Book of Job, Par. gr. 135, 1361–62 (©National Library of France, Manuscripts collection).

similar structure, they offer an iconographic variety which is mainly found in subsidiary elements. In the first miniature (folio 9v), the three daughters and a young man, probably the younger son, are completely separated from the male family members as they sit across from them (**Figure 6.1**). Two female figures serve outdoors. Of particular interest is a female figure that is holding the edge of a screen in the upper right part of the miniature and seems to be watching over the diners in a protective manner (**Figures 6.1 and 6.3**). In folio 18v, a similar dining scene is depicted in the house of Job's eldest son (**Figure 6.2**). The three daughters, whose heads and bodies are covered, sit next to the host and the rest of their brothers and are depicted in a slightly smaller scale. All women who are serving come from inside the house, unlike a serving boy in folio 18v, who carries a spit-roasted bird and does not seem to be coming from indoors.

In the two miniatures in question, the depiction of the female figures reveals differences in terms of their appearance and actions during a family gathering. Some of the women wear an ample outer garment which covers their head and body, while the others appear in more closely-fitting dresses

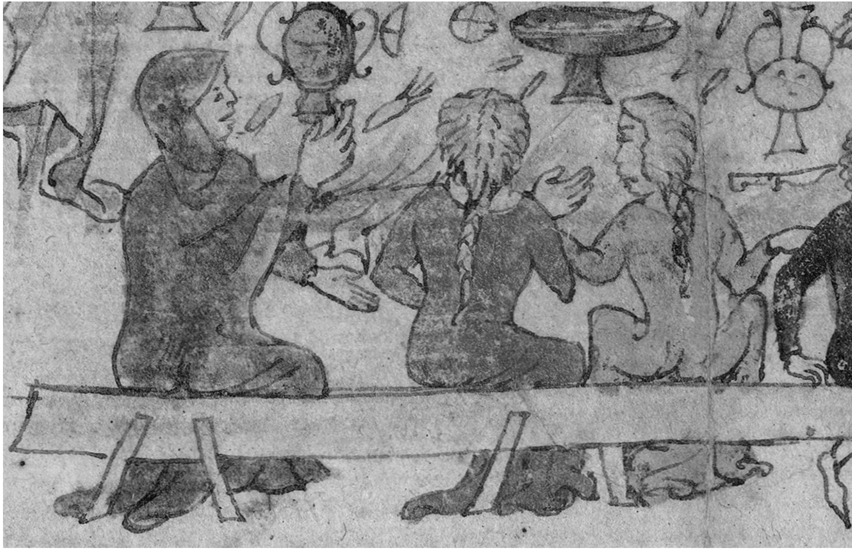

Figure 6.4a The group of sisters in the scene of the family meal in folio 9v. Manuscript miniature, Book of Job, Par. gr. 135, 1361–62 (©National Library of France, Manuscripts collection).

Figure 6.4b The group of sisters in the scene of the family meal in folio 18v. Manuscript miniature, Book of Job, Par. gr. 135, 1361–62 (©National Library of France, Manuscripts collection).

with rich colour variations and without head coverings. Based on their appearance, there are three distinctive female groups that are depicted in the two miniatures: women with covered heads participating in the meal, women with uncovered heads serving dinner, and women with covered and uncovered heads sitting together opposite the men. This last category is of particular interest. The fact that one covered woman is sitting next to women with uncovered heads in folio 9v (**Figure 6.4a**), shows a clear distinction among the women's group which is not based on social rank, since all the women that are sitting are sisters according to the biblical text, but rather on other criteria. The choice of giving the three sisters a different appearance is not easy to interpret. All the more so since in folio 18v the sisters are all portrayed in the same way, meaning with covered heads (**Figure 6.4b**). One assumption is that this may be due to a differentiation in terms of age or social status (married/widowed, single)[16] or even to personal limitations as to how one chooses to appear in a mixed-gender meal. Post-adolescent females were expected to appear with their heads covered.[17]

All the covered women wear an outer one-piece garment that covers the head and the body and has loose sleeves under which the underlying garments can be distinguished. Long cloaks worn from the top of the head down the back to the feet, sometimes heavy in appearance, were widespread

Figure 6.5a Serving lady in the scene of the family meal in folio 9v. Manuscript miniature, Book of Job, Par. gr. 135, 1361–62 (©National Library of France, Manuscripts collection).

in Levant among local female population.[18] Lighter long veils which were in use by both local and Latin ladies were the mixture of the shorter lighter veils of Western fashion with local heavy cloaks.[19]

In folio 9v, the women carrying the food are identical in appearance with the two sisters whose heads are uncovered, implying that the former may not be maidservants but probably housewives, responsible for taking care of the meal (**Figure 6.1**). In Byzantine art, women with uncovered heads and standardised hairstyles are usually young women who appear in scenes from the life cycle of the Virgin Mary, unmarried girls, women mourning, and even sinful women and dancers.[20] The uncovered heads of the women in the two scenes of the manuscript may also indicate a private family meal, where younger women could probably appear with their heads uncovered. In folio 9v, all diners, with the exception of one female figure, are depicted with their heads uncovered. Besides, the curtains in both miniatures are employed to create the impression of enclosed, private spaces.[21] Finally, in one case (folio 18v), a female figure that is serving appears with her hair tied up with a white scarf which might have a resemblance to the white male cap that is found in representations of donors from Cyprus of the late 13th-early 14th century, which was most likely influenced by French fashion (**Figures 6.2 and 6.5c**).[22]

Figure 6.5b Serving lady in the scene of the family meal in folio 9v. Manuscript miniature, Book of Job, Par. gr. 135, 1361–62 (©National Library of France, Manuscripts collection).

Figure 6.5c Serving lady in the scene of the family meal in folio 18v. Manuscript miniature, Book of Job, Par. gr. 135, 1361–62 (©National Library of France, Manuscripts collection).

The younger women with no head coverings that appear to be sitting at the table – but not alongside the men – and who are serving the food are mainly dressed in a simple outer garment in a variety of colours, which is close-fitting in the upper torso and sleeves, wider on the hips and with a round neckline (**Figures 6.4a, 6.5a and 6.5c**). This garment, the so-called *cotta*, takes its final form in Western Europe during the 13th century[23] and appears in the Latin provinces of the Eastern Mediterranean in the late 13th-early 14th century.[24] The use of this garment is not foreign to Mistra. At the south portico of the church of the Odigitria (Aphentiko) in Mistra, the funerary portrait of two upper class women wearing cottas dates back to the second half of the 14th century.[25] In folio 9v, the female figure who is serving holding a platter wears a sleeveless, dark red outer garment whose origin can be traced back to the Frankish clothing trends of the 13th century (**Figure 6.5b**).[26] Thus, the appearance of the uncovered women in the two miniatures reflects clothing choices of a Western European origin that were found in Mistra not only in formal occasions attended by members of the upper classes but also in informal family gatherings. This implies that imported garments were adopted and probably widely reproduced

in the multicultural environment of Mistra, most likely because they met women's needs for elegance and convenience, without functioning any more as a symbol of national identity.

It is worth noting that the influence of Western European fashion is also reflected in the garments worn by the male figures in the two miniatures. The men wear single-coloured outer garments that reach the middle leg and are close-fitting around the upper torso and the sleeves.[27] In folio 18v, two male figures are depicted wearing a *skiadion*, a typical urban hat of Western European origin which was very common during the Late Byzantine period.[28] Another male figure in the same miniature wears a kind of red cap bearing a white brim, indicating that it may have a fur lining.[29]

The social significance of clothing, both male and female, as depicted in the miniatures of the manuscript of Job, is that it may reflect the non ceremonial hybrid sartorial trends of the upper classes of Mistra, which had various political and cultural contacts with the Latins. It is an indirect reference to the sponsor of the manuscript, who probably comes from the multicultural circle of Manuel Kantakouzinos and Isabella of Lusignan.[30]

The miniature painter depicts the female role and status within the family, although probably not intentionally, through details that reveal the prevailing mentality regarding their gender. The two miniatures thus portray women with the status of the sister (**Figure 6.4**), and possibly of the wife (folio 9v) and the servant (**Figures 6.5a–6.5c**), as well as the elderly figure that is attending the symposium, abstaining from any kind of work and depicted in an honourable way (**Figure 6.3**).[31] We could assume that this is a maternal figure, as she seems to watch over the members of an extended family. This is supported by her iconographic analogy to the wife of Job and mother of his children, attributed to folio 7v of the manuscript.[32]

One could suggest that the two miniatures reveal the importance of the various female members within the family (mother, sisters, wives), based on the firmly embedded priority – on a legal level as well – given by the Byzantine society to blood relations as opposed to relations by marriage.[33] Tonia Kiousopoulou has shown that in the Despotate of Epirus during the 13th century, women of all social classes were often identified by the name of their father, and to a lesser degree, by the name of their spouses, indicating that vertical family relations were more important than horizontal ones.[34] A similar, vertical, reading of family ties may arise from comparing the two family dining scenes. Starting from the maternal figure in folio 9v, who is standing at the top and watches over the scene, the focus is shifted to the three sisters, who in both miniatures appear to be taking part in the meal, and even with their heads uncovered in the one case (folio 9v), but rather as a small group that sets itself apart from the men. The two women who are serving in folio 9v, whom we assume to be the spouses of the brothers, are portrayed on the same scale with the sisters and are dressed almost alike, suggesting a similar social status.

The elderly figure in folio 9v (**Figure 6.3**), who is standing over the dining scene in a protective manner, indicating the close and affectionate relations with the diners, probably reflects the general spirit of the *Book of Job*, which fosters the concept of wisdom and deep knowledge that comes with age.[35] Her prominent position in the miniature is in part due to the consideration extended by the Byzantine society to the elderly and especially to elderly parents: showing respect and honour resulting from the acknowledgement of their experience, maturity, and moral superiority, and also due to an understanding of their physical weakness due to age. For this reason, the elderly are thought to be venerable individuals and serve as mentors and teachers. It is the social recognition of old age, prevalent in the Byzantine society, which most likely stems from the family institution and certainly reflects it.[36] The care of one's elderly parents is left to the children, with whom they often live, forming an extended family model. The strong sense of responsibility to provide care for the elderly parents is often found in Byzantine written sources, especially in the lives of the saints,[37] and it was up until recently instilled in the Greek family.[38] Ideally, the elderly must disregard their physical weaknesses and be, as far as possible, self-sufficient by going about their daily lives.[39]

Family relationships had, at least in theory, a hierarchical structure. Obedience to one's superior was a core value that was deeply embedded in Byzantine society.[40] The exercise of parental power by the father was self-evident and had to be acknowledged by the child, whose obedience was mandatory.[41] Within the family, the female offspring inherited a share of the parental property as dowry. Matrimony, especially within the middle and upper classes, was considered an important transaction under which profitable partnerships were formed in the context of patriarchy, and in which women had literally no say in the choice of their spouse and were often regarded as a trading commodity. From the 11th century onwards, women, at least those belonging to the upper classes, provided their future husbands, in addition to the monetary rewards, social advancement which resulted from the social status of their families.[42]

Marriage in the Byzantine society generally involved people of similar social class, with the woman eventually adapting to the social status of her husband.[43] It was quite common, at least during the Late Byzantine period, for the woman to go live at her husband's house. During this period, there were households with a nuclear family structure, which appear to be the most common, and households with an extended family structure.[44] In marriage, the position of the woman was typically inferior to that of the man. Women were expected to show obedience as a token of their love and were given the role of the helper, while the husbands acted as their master and protector. This attitude is justified by the prevailing view of the time that women were weak by nature and intellectually inferior to men.[45] As Liz James has pointed out, "the concept of gender can be used to explain

the structures and systems that keep women in their place: in other words, patriarchy."[46]

In Middle and Late Byzantine written sources that have been produced on behalf of women, they identify themselves through their family bonds.[47] The prominent role of women inside the family has long been pointed out by scholars.[48] The public sphere was primarily a male prerogative. In the two miniatures, the women who are in charge of the dinner appear to be coming from inside their homes, unlike the young man in folio 18v who appears to be entering from the outside. Besides, writers from the Middle Byzantine period requested that women and young girls be kept away from the sight of visitors. This mentality, if ever it was strictly adopted, seems to have softened by the Late Middle Ages, where women, especially widows, gained control over domestic matters, from raising the children to managing the financial assets.[49]

Their most important role on a personal and social level was that of motherhood, and childlessness was considered disgraceful. Besides, the purpose of marriage was procreation.[50] The woman's main responsibility was the organization and management of the household. From raising the children, to managing the staff and supervising the warehouses (in wealthier classes), to making clothes for the family, preparing the meals, and cleaning and maintaining the garments across all social levels.[51] Bread kneading and food preparation were female responsibilities and they are rarely illustrated in Byzantine art.[52]

In family meals, both in the Byzantium and Western Europe, it was considered more appropriate for the men to sit apart from the women.[53] The miniatures from the Book of Job reflect the prevailing view regarding the inferior position of the female over the male members of the household. The women prepare and serve the meal, sit away from the men or are illustrated in a smaller scale. However, their crucial role is evident in the organization of the symposium, and hence in responding to the practical needs of family life. The men perceive the care provided by the women within their family as a matter of course.

One should underline the obvious differences between the serving girl wearing a bonnet in folio 18v, who is depicted in a smaller scale than the serving women in folio 9v and with a servile status (**Figure 6.5**). Although no identification is entirely certain, except for the seven brothers and three sisters, it could be assumed that she is a maidservant, a hard working girl. The female servant appears from inside the house, like all the women who serve, but she walks with her shoulders hunched forward and her eyes lowered, indicating her inferior social status. In contrast, the women serving in folio 9v are looking at the diners and are represented on a similar scale as them. The servant's clothes are similar to those worn by the uncovered women. It is probably reasonable to assume that the servants are wearing the old clothes of their ladies.

Women were traditionally employed as midwives, child-minders, practical doctors, and maids.[54] The role of the maid was taken on either by girls

from lower social strata or mainly by people belonging to the slave class.[55] In past centuries, European children might be sent out into service by their families to reduce the number of mouths to feed. Finding a job as a servant could be a good solution for orphans. Other people without a family, such as widows, might consider working as a domestic servant a suitable way to find a house and a living. In this sense domestic service could be a kind of refuge for people without a supporting family.[56] Domestic servants were responsible for all the housework, contributed to the upbringing of the children, accompanied the members of the family outside the home and generally linked their lives with a wealthy household.

In the two miniatures in question, gender roles and family relationships are outlined based on iconographic diversity. These differences probably indicate separate age groups and a sort of ranking in the relationships among both the female and male family members. The differences in appearance between the women suggest that they are part of a separate age and social group. The women with the covered heads are not participating in any tasks and are sitting at the same table with the men or have a supervisory role. The women with the uncovered heads are likely younger, especially since they appear to be dressed in closer-fitting garments that reflect influences of Western European fashion. The latter take part in the meal while they also help out. The needs of the diners in folio 18v are likely covered by the domestic servants. The posture of the female servant implies that her social status is in all likelihood inferior to the male one.

Although the women are taking part in the family meal, their position is inferior compared to the men's prominent role at the table. Men are placed centrally in the composition and it is the host who serves the main dish, revealing his vital role in providing his family with food. Women are serving or they are depicted at the foot of the table and their heads are covered when they are sitting next to their male siblings. However, although their position is considered inferior, it is also profoundly complementary. The woman (mother, sister or wife) was the most crucial parameter in maintaining family cohesion and stability in the Byzantine society and no exception to this role was tolerated; a role which was after all accepted by the woman as well.[57] Their inferior position to their husbands could to some extent be offset by the advantage they enjoyed as mothers, in a society where family was identified as "the one form of association that flourished in Byzantium."[58] The development of an affectionate relationship, in particular with male children, under the patriarchal system, was crucial in improving the woman's social position as a mother. By the 11th century, the role of the mother had become the most powerful ideological role for women and was developed in line with the growth of the cult of the Virgin. This female role is reflected in folio 9v and seems to have had a strong impact in the Byzantium.[59] Widows and older women were allowed to show more initiative.[60] In Mistra, and other areas of the Eastern Mediterranean, women are depicted as church donors, which implies that they were able to take on the position of head of the family and manage its assets.[61]

The two scenes under consideration are not enough to help us draw general conclusions about inter-family relationships during the Late Byzantine period. They do, however, offer a rare visual testimony of an ordinary activity, which is difficult to reproduce in texts. They also capture aspects of Byzantine expectations of gender among the social elite. These scenes also demonstrate traditional gender-based limitations within the hierarchical family structure, which is dominated by the Christian Orthodox faith. They imply that women, while experiencing patriarchal control of family life, enjoy different degrees of appreciation and self-will according to their age and role within the family. Motherhood seemed to be a passport for social recognition, while the servants were at the bottom of the social pyramid, and even then, the female ones were most probably placed in a position inferior to their male counterparts. The social status of the female servant in the Byzantium, whether a free woman or a slave, hasn't been the subject of a comprehensive study, probably because it is rarely traced in the written sources of the period.

Notes

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7 Ordinary women in Byzantine funerary contexts from Greece; a view from the bones

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Ordinary women in Byzantium are traditionally addressed through textual sources and material evidence that reveal their everyday activities and duties.[1] They are also archaeologically inferred through burial practices as represented by inscribed tombstones, grave architecture, typology of burial offerings, and objects of adornment that accompany their skeletons,[2] when present in primary contexts. Nevertheless, no matter the aspect of Byzantine life or death assessed through documentary and archaeological evidence, the daily chores and challenges of women, especially of the lower classes, remain largely unknown. How representative is historical information of the real, everyday life of Byzantine women? Can we learn all about women solely from historical studies and material culture? Within this frame, the main contribution of bioarchaeology to the better understanding of human past is that it enhances views of the actual physical life lived by an individual to a far greater extent than written or purely archaeological sources allow.

Skeletal remains of past populations are a reservoir of information about the conduct of people during their lives and the way they were treated when dead. Much of women's life experiences are "written" in their bones and can be deciphered from their burials. The purpose of this chapter is to offer a contextual interpretation of women's health and status through time. To achieve this, bioarchaeological data on bones attributed to women from Byzantine sites in Greece will be analyzed and a case study from central Greece will be presented in more detail. This integrated approach will add an important line of evidence for understanding the welfare and identity of women in Byzantium.

The biological profile and, by extension, the social and cultural attributes of women from various archaeological contexts in Greek Antiquity[3] have been addressed in the bioarchaeological literature very recently, but still remains a largely unexplored field of research. The risk of death during pregnancy, differential access to foodstuffs by men and women, modification of anterior teeth when these were used as a third-hand in spinning thread, occurrence of markers of occupational stress suggestive of squatting found on female skeletons, and evidence of ancient slavery and artificial cranial modification[4] are some of the skeletal and biological features evoked in these works.

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Interesting case studies also describe the individual identity of ancient women. Such instances include the embalmed body and skeleton of an upper-class old woman found in a Roman marble sarcophagus containing a lead coffin from the Eastern Cemetery of Thessaloniki.[5] Another case includes two beheaded female skeletons dated to the end of the Hellenistic period, found in the House of Fourni at the island of Delos;[6] these skeletons raise questions about the identity of these women and the reason(s) behind their presence and dismemberment at a time when it was forbidden to be either born or die on the sacred island of Apollon. The cremated remains of a woman and her offspring were found in Geometric Athens; osteological analysis likely suggests that this "rich Athenian lady was cremated and buried as a pregnant woman."[7] Finally, a probable case of suppurative osteomyelitis is recorded on the right clavicle of a young female from Nichoria.[8]

Byzantine bioarcheology in Greece has blossomed during the last two decades as significant number of studies have been made on human osteological remains from Early Christian and Byzantine cemeteries.[9] These studies explore a variety of questions relating to the health and disease of populations, their diet, and mortuary practices covering a wide range of time and sociopolitical settings but none of this research has particularly focused on women. From a European perspective,[10] it seems that over two millennia, women were less resilient than men against early mortality despite their stronger immune response.[11] Skeletal evidence of interpersonal violence increased up to the Late Medieval period for both sexes, although women experienced a lesser incidence of violence than men did.[12] Bereczki and others[13] also suggest that female health worsened over time, as evidenced by linear enamel hypoplasia. The prevalence of cranial porosities for both sexes was already high in the Early Medieval period, shows a peak in the High Medieval period, and then a decrease from the Late Medieval period onwards; and it was higher for people of both sexes living in towns.[14]

The published and unpublished data collected here from women's bones of various socioeconomic contexts are presented in **Table 7.1**. First, a chronological perspective on the bones of women[15] is provided; this approach includes evidence on age-at-death, stature, paleopathology, and diet. It also considers several socioeconomic variables such as the urban-rural settlement types and the association of the burials with a church. Second, the analysis of mortuary practices explores the differential burial treatment in primary inhumations and commingled remains, the inclusion of women in the formal burial place, and their segregation or inclusion in the formation of family groupings; this analysis uses the representation of women in the samples in relation to men and juveniles across various settings and skeletal evidence.

In particular, the skeletal data include stature, dental diseases, and cranial porosities that are usually used to explore health and living conditions

Table 7.1 List of sites analyzed in the text; numbers of women, men and subadults; average of individuals per grave; stature of men and women

Site	Period & date		Settlement type	Church	No. graves	Total individuals	Average Ind/Gr	Adults	Subadults	Females	Males	Stature M	Stature F	Reference
Maroneia	EC	5th–6th c.	urban	no	36	39	1.1	34	5	12	9	170 (n = 6)	157 (n = 6)	Tritsaroli - Karadima 2017
Akraiphia	EC	5th–7th c.	rural	no	35	45	1.3	27	18	1	5	173 (n = 4)	178 (n = 1)	Tritsaroli 2017
Eleutherna	EC	5th–7th c.	rural	yes	49	151	3.1	100	51	21	52	169	160	Bourbou 2004
Messene	EC	5th–7th c.	urban	no	42	74	1.8	55	19	12	23	170	152	Bourbou 2004
Sourtara	EC	6th–7thc.	rural	no	70	71	1	56	15	15	27	170	152	Bourbou and Tsilipakou 2009
Isthmia	EC	6th–8th c.	rural	no	11	12	1.1	9	3	2	6	173 (n = 1)	-	Rife 2012
Abdera 'Site A'	EC/B	6th–10th c.	urban	yes	29	40	1.4	22	18	5	16	170	159	Agelarakis - Agelarakis 2015
Abdera 'Site B'	B	11th–12th c.	urban	yes	45	60	1.3	37	23	8	29	167	156	Agelarakis - Agelarakis 2015
Spata	B	11th–14th c.	rural	yes	115	199	1.7	138	61	13	19	161 (n = 1)	157 (n = 3)	Tritsaroli 2006, unpublished data
Kastella	B	11th c.	urban	no	32	59	1.8	35	24	8	15	161 (n = 2)	154 (n = 2)	Bourbou 2010
Stylos	B	11th–12th c.	rural	yes	-	45	-	29	16	11	9	166 (n = 3)	-	Bourbou 2010
Xironomi	B	10th–11th c.	rural	yes	20	55	2.8	19	36	2	5	-	-	unpublished data
Thebes	B	12th–13th c.	urban	yes	26	151	5.8	128	23	16	23	173 (n = 5)	-	Tritsaroli 2006, unpublished data
Korytiani	B	10th–11th c.	rural	no	176	202	1.1	131	71	44	40	-	-	Papageorgopoulou - Xirotiris 2009
Abdera 'Site C'	LB	13th–14th c.	rural	yes	20	24	1.2	9	15	1	8	170	-	Agelarakis - Agelarakis 2015
Pantanassa	LB	15th–16th c.	urban	yes	26	61	2.3	47	14	4	2	-	-	Tritsaroli 2006, unpublished data
Gouriza	EO	16th–17th c.	rural	no	32	34	1.1	12	22	3	9	167 (n = 9)	153 (n = 3)	Tritsaroli 2019
Corinth	EO	17th c.	urban	no	81	133	1.6	79	54	23	54	178 (n = 45)	171 (n = 19)	Rohn and others 2009

Note: EC: Early Christian, B: Byzantine, LB: Late Byzantine, EO: Early Ottoman.

of past populations.[16] Lengths of the long limb bones are commonly used for reconstructing terminal (adult) height (stature). Adult stature is influenced by genetic and environmental factors and is considered a good marker of long-term changes as well as local and interregional variability of physical well-being, economic, and nutritional improvement, resource availability and social context. Evidence from a wide range of osteological investigations[17] has shown that children with inadequate nutrition, exposed to disease or involved in work fail to reach their genetic potential, while those who are well-nourished and healthy succeed. Using the raw data from the long bones rather than estimated statures for comparison provide more precise proxies for health and status.[18] However, this is rarely available for most published assemblages; accordingly, stature estimates are employed.

Teeth are the repository of evidence for a variety of diseases that can elucidate aspects of oral health, diet, and physiological stress during growth. Dental diseases (dental caries, calculus and antemortem tooth loss/AMTL) are associated with the consumption of specific foodstuffs and can elucidate dietary choices; as far as women are concerned, it is generally assumed that they are more vulnerable to caries due to gender differences in dietary habits, hormonal changes, and life-histories.[19] Dental enamel hypoplasia results from the disruption of normal enamel growth during tooth crown development. Its appearance varies between small pits and horizontal grooves (linear enamel hypoplasias, LEH) that "are not remodeled during later life and, therefore, are a permanent indicator of growth disruption."[20] LEH has a multifactorial etiology and can be associated with childhood disease, vitamin deficiency, malnutrition, or illness, hereditary anomalies, localized traumas, or other kinds of relatively acute periods of stress and growth arrests in childhood. Nevertheless, the majority of potential causes of LEH is related to the quality of nutrition, health, and general living conditions; thus, LEH can also be used as a proxy for nutrition and health status during growth.[21]

Cranial porosities commonly refer to holes in the orbital roofs (*cribra orbitalia*) or cranial vault (porotic hyperostosis) that are caused by the expansion of the diploë of the cranium due to marrow hypertrophy. They are generally considered to represent metabolic stress of varying etiologies; in archaeological populations, the most probable cause for the lesions observed is "acquired nutritionally induced anemia resulting from poor nutrition with reduced availability of animal food sources, in conjunction with multiple stressors such as chronic exposure to parasites and high pathogen loads"[22] and therefore are used as proxy for quality of life, living conditions, and nutritional deficiencies. Statistical comparisons on the frequencies of pathological conditions employed chi-square test with statistical significance set at 0.05.

Observations regarding demography, health, and disease follow. Age-at-death of early[23] and later periods[24] show that this was usually lower for

females; they generally reached the age of 35/40. Minor urban-rural variations cannot be statistically validated due to the small number of sexed individuals from several sites. A peak in early female mortality is noted for Late Byzantine Abdera (northern Greece),[25] while at Early Ottoman Corinth in the Peloponnese "the greatest number of adult male deaths occurred during their prime years -30s to early 40s - while more females died in later years".[26] Early female mortality was significantly caused by risks and complications occurring during pregnancy and childbirth such as miscarriages, hemorrhages and infections.[27] A woman with a full-term fetus in transverse position still within the pelvis was found in 13th century Frankish Corinth demonstrating in the most explicit way the dangers incurred during childbirth that lead to the death of both of them; it is suspected that the mother suffered from brucellosis.[28] Finally, a unique female skeleton (32–40 years) with venereal syphilis was found at Post-Medieval Pylos in the Peloponnese.[29]

According to the data reported in **Table 7.1**, the living stature of Early Christian women ranges between 152–160 cm, it decreases probably during the Byzantine period to 154–156 cm and raises again to 153–171 cm during the Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman times. Turning to rural-urban differences, females as well as males appear taller in the cities (152–171 cm for females, 167–178 cm for males) than in the countryside (152–160 cm for females, 161–176 cm for males from Panakton).[30] Again, these variations cannot be statistically validated.

Dental diseases are recorded for females and they have a variable expression (**Table 7.2**). Female (9.3%, 60/648) and male teeth (7.2%, 68/946) are equally affected by caries; they also exhibit similar frequency for AMTL (14.1%, 134/951 for females and 12.8%, 189/1478 for males). Females (41.6%, 149/358) are less affected by calculus than males (45.9%, 258/562) although the frequency is high for both sexes and not statistically different (**Table 7.3**). When exploring temporal variations, the frequency of calculus for Byzantine females (64%, 32/50) doubles when compared to the Early Christian women (30%, 67/223) and this increase is maintained for the later periods (58%, 50/85). On the contrary, caries and AMTL for females drop significantly from the Early Christian to the Byzantine, but rise again for later periods though without reaching Early Christian frequencies. It is noteworthy that Early Christian females were significantly more affected by caries and AMTL than their contemporary males. When the type of settlement is taken into account, women's teeth from urban cemeteries (11.9%, 37/310) have significantly more caries than those from the countryside (6.8%, 23/338) ($p = 0.024$) while the opposite is observed for calculus, since women in rural settings (53.6%, 96/179) are significantly more affected than women in cities (29.6%, 53/179) ($p = 0.000$). This pattern is not observed for males, for whom all dental pathologies are higher for those living in the countryside than for those living in the cities. This data suggests that: the diet of women in urban centers relied more on cariogenic foodstuffs than those of men and

people who lived in the countryside in general; and the consumption of a more protein-rich diet by women living in the countryside doubled from the Byzantine period onwards. However, these variations are not visible in stable isotope analyses conducted so far; paleodietary reconstruction does not suggest differential access to food by gender.[31]

The overall frequency of LEH shows that both sexes are equally affected (32.4%, 194/599 for women, 28.7%, 231/804 for men). Women and men from the countryside exhibit significantly higher frequencies than those living in the cities (**Table 7.3**) but women coming from rural settings were more stressed than men. In addition, the incidence of LEH in women increases in the Byzantine period suggesting that they became more stressed over-time. Finally, results on cranial porosities are less telling and most of them cannot be statistically validated. In the overall sample, cribra orbitalia exhibits similar frequencies for both sexes although women are less affected by porotic hyperostosis than men. No differences are found across settings. Temporal variations show that women are less affected than men through time. This find is in contrast to temporal variations for LEH according to which women were physiologically more stressed than men during the same time period.

Turning to mortuary practices, interesting observations can be made. Taking into account the number of women in the samples (**Table 7.4**), it is noted that overall, women (14%, 201/1455) are less numerous than men (24%, 351/1455) and their representation varies from 2% to 31%. An exception is the samples of Early Christian Maroneia in Thrace (F/M ratio 12:9) as well as the Byzantine samples of Stylos in Crete (F/M ratio 11:9) and Korytiani in Macedonia (northern Greece, F/M ratio 44:40) where women outnumber men. Noteworthy is the large number of adults of indeterminate sex for the sites of Early Christian Arkaiphia, Byzantine Thebes, Xironomi and Spata, and Late Byzantine Pantanassa: this is indicative of the poor preservation of the bones as a whole or the difficulty in obtaining sexed individuals due to the commingling of the remains from collective burials (for example Xironomi, Thebes, Pantanassa).[32] When it comes to the socioeconomic context, women are equally to be found in rural and urban settings (13% and 14% respectively). On the other hand, men are more numerous in urban burial grounds when compared to the rural ones (28% and 21% respectively). More subadults are found in rural cemeteries (rural 37% and urban 29%). Finally, temporal variations show that the number of women is similar for all time periods varying between 12% and 16%. Similar representation is also observed for the number of subadults in the Early Christian (30%) and Byzantine era (33%) but it increases in the later periods (42%). On the contrary, men are less numerous in the Byzantine sample (18%) contrary to the Early Christian (32%) and the later periods (29%).

Table 7.2 Teeth affected and True Prevalence Rates (TPR % or number of teeth exhibiting the condition (*n*) divided by the number of teeth examined (*N*) × 100) for caries, calculus, AMTL and LEH; individuals affected and Crude Prevalence Rates (CPR % or number of individuals exhibiting the condition (*n*) divided by the number of individuals examined (*N*) × 100) for cribra orbitalia (CO) and porotic hyperostosis (PH)

	Caries TPR (n/N)		**Calculus TPR (n/N)**		**AMTL TPR (n/N)**		**LEH TPR (n/N)**		**CO CPR (n/N)**		**PH CPR (n/N)**	
Site	**males**	**females**	**Males**	**females**	**males**	**females**	**males**	**females**	**males**	**females**	**males**	**females**
Maroneia	1.6 (2/123)	16 (29/181)	33.3 (41/123)	29.6 (53/179)	5.9 (11/185)	13.2 (36/173)	19.4 (24/124)	16.3 (28/172)	0 (0/2)	20 (1/5)	50 (4/8)	33.3 (4/12)
Akraiphia	9.1 (2/22)	20 (2/10)	40.9 (9/22)	0 (0/10)	53.4 (31/58)	25.6 (11/43)	22.7 (5/22)	0 (0/10)	0 (0/1)	0 (0/1)	20 (1/5)	0/1
Eleutherna	25.9 (160/618) of teeth with dental pathologies, males more affected than females								0	0	0	0
Messene	29.7 (188/632) of teeth with dental pathologies, males more affected than females								4 males	2 females	0	0
Sourtara	81.5% of males and 66.7% of females with dental diseases								3 males	0	3 males	0
Isthmia	7.75 (11/142)	8.82 (3/34)	30.28 (43/142)	41.28 (14/34)	6.4 (11/173)	21 (13/62)	42.86% of individuals with maxillary canines affected ($n = 3$ males)		2 individuals with cribra orbitalia		not available	
Spata	5.4 (7/129)	3.8 (6/159)	not available	not available	14.3 (44/307)	14.7 (34/231)	55.8 (72/129)	51.3 (81/158)	23.1 (3/13)	9.1 (1/11)	78.6 (11/14)	41.7 (5/12)
Kastella	2 males	none	5 males	2 females	4 males	2 females	2 males	1 female	0	0	0	0
Stylos	3 males	none	2 males	none	4 males	None	none	none	0	1 female	0	1 female
Xironomi	0 (0/101)	4 (2/50)	23.8 (24/101)	64 (32/50)	1.5 (2/130)	7.5 (4/53)	16.8 (17/101)	32 (16/50)	25 (1/4)	0 (0/1)	60 (3/5)	50 (1/2)
Thebes	3.7 (9/241)	4.5 (5/111)	not available	not available	5.8 (19/328)	7.4 (19/257)	26.3 (63/240)	37.6 (41/109)	9.1 (1/11)	11.8 (2/17)	66.7 (12/18)	44.4 (8/18)
Korytiani	4.5	3.6	9.87	4.96	not available	not available	4.67	1.62	not available	not available	not available	not available
Pantanassa	28.6 (4/14)	16.7 (3/18)	not available	not available	40.7 (11/27)	22.2 (8/36)	0 (0/14)	0 (0/15)	0 (0/1)	0 (0/3)	1/1	33.3 (1/3)
Gouriza	19 (33/174)	11.8 (10/85)	81 (141/174)	58.8 (50/85)	22.2 (60/270)	9.4 (9/96)	28.7 (50/174)	32.9 (28/85)	22.2 (2/9)	66.7 (2/3)	88.9 (8/9)	100 (3/3)
Corinth	81% ($n = 32$) of males and 79% ($n = 19$) of females with dental diseases						6 males	0	11 males	3 females	not available	not available

Note: AMTL: antemortem tooth loss; LEH: linear enamel hypoplasia; CO: cribra orbitalia; PH: porotic hyperostosis.

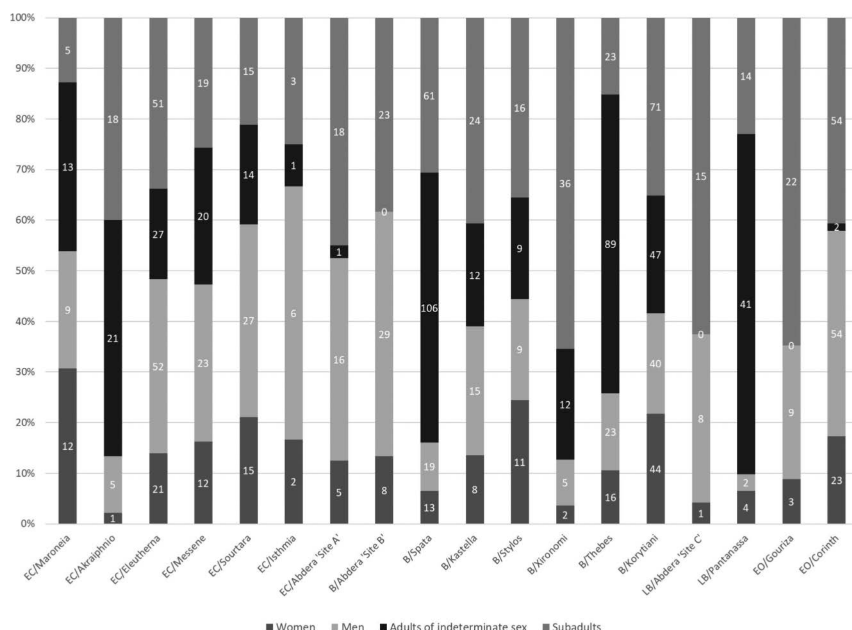
Table 7.3 *p* values of the factors affecting the expression of dental diseases and cranial porosities

Condition	Sex	Females	Males	Urban	Rural	Time period/Sex	Time period/ Females
Caries	n.s.	U > R: 0.024	R > U: 0.001	F > M: 0.000	n.s.	EC: F > M: 0.000 B: n.s. LB/O: n.s.	EC > B: 0.000 EC -LB/O: n.s. LB/O > B: 0.002
Calculus	n.s.	R > U: 0.000	R > U: 0.001	n.s.	n.s.	EC: n.s. B: F > M: 0.000 LB/O: F < M: 0.000	B > EC: 0.000 LB/O > EC: 0.000 B-LB/O: n.s.
AMTL	n.s.	n.s.	R > U: 0.000	F > M: 0.002	n.s.	EC: F > M: 0.001 B: n.s. LB/O: F < M: 0.009	EC > B: 0.000 EC > LB/O: 0.035 B-LB/O: n.s.
LEH	n.s.	R > U: 0.000	R > U: 0.001	n.s.	F > M: 0.039	EC: n.s. B: F > M: 0.001 LB/O: n.s.	B > EC: 0.000 LB/O > EC: 0.011 B > LB/O: 0.006
CO	n.s.	-	-	-	-	EC: - B: - LB/O: -	EC -B: - EC -LB/O: - B-LB/O: -
PH	M > F: 0.013	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	EC: n.s. B: F < M: 0.026 LB/O: -	EC -B: - EC -LB/O: - B-LB/O: -

Note: AMTL: antemortem tooth loss; LEH: linear enamel hypoplasia; CO: cribra orbitalia; PH: porotic hyperostosis; R: rural; U: urban; F: females; M: males; n.s.: non-significant.

Ordinary women are also examined through mortuary practices across grave architecture, burial type, and spatial distribution. Regarding grave architecture, the most common types used during the Byzantine era were pits, tile-covered, cists, and vaulted graves.[33] The first two types were simple, humble constructions usually adapted to the size of the dead body and made for the inhumation of one or two individuals. In contrast, cists and vaulted graves were more elaborate, solid constructions and were intended to be used over several generations (collective burials);[34] due to the work required for their construction, cists and vaulted graves may also reflect the status of the deceased. When a cemetery is organized in relation to an ecclesiastical monument, then the spatial analysis of the funerary area by using several funerary zones is suggested,[35] with the church and the area

Table 7.4 Representation of women, men and subadults in Early Christian (EC), Byzantine (B), Late Byzantine (LB) and Early Ottoman (EO) samples



in front of the church's entry being the most prominent. The area inside a religious edifice was prestigious and held the inhumation of particular social/professional groups, such as members of the clergy (for example monks, priests), high-status citizens, and members of powerful families (for example the founders of the church, influential laymen, dignitaries);[36] the right to be buried inside a church was hereditary and transmissible for the latter.[37] On the contrary, the ordinary person was not allowed to be buried inside a church. The area in front of the church's entry also remains highly desired for its visibility, while other areas around the church were less sought after.

Based on the above, we observe the following: graves in cemeteries with churches include 2.4 individuals on average, while same per grave in cemeteries without a church is 1.3. If this evidence is indicative of the topography of the funerary space, then the (re)use of graves for more individuals when lying close to an ecclesiastic monument is observed.[38] The average number of individuals per grave does not change considerably through time (EC = 1.6 ind/gr, B = 1.9 ind/gr, LB-EO = 1.6 ind/gr) although an important variation is noted for the Byzantine period (1.1–5.8 ind/gr). We did not notice any significant gender variation in any of these cases; women are almost equally represented in funerary spaces with or without a church (10.3% and 18% respectively) and they are always less numerous than men (20.7% and 27.7%

respectively). The available bioarchaeological record does not allow one to fully explore the place of women in the funerary space across grave variability, burial types, and topography. The following examples, though, illustrate urban-countryside variations and by extension social differentiations.

Xironomi in Boeotia is located south-west of Thebes (central Greece); the osteological sample was unearthed in 20 graves of various types (16 cists, three tile-covered and one pit) found in association to a church, most of them containing collective deposits of bones. Due to bone fragmentation and commingling, only two females were identified from collective assemblages performed in cist graves 5 and 25. In grave 5 at the east of the church, the skeleton of a woman and the bones of three subadults (a newborn baby, a child and a subadult of unknown age) were retrieved. The woman and the newborn were primary inhumations; the woman was buried first and then the body of the baby was placed close to the woman's head at a later time. The bones of the four-year old child and the third subadult were found commingled. Grave 25 is located in the narthex and contained the skeletal remains of five individuals: a middle-aged woman (35–50 years), a middle-aged and a young (20–35 yrs) man, a newborn baby and a six-year old child. The woman was found in primary position, probably the latest inhumation in the grave; the rest of the bones were commingled. Degenerative lesions of osteoarthritis were noted on her spine, shoulders, upper limbs, and hands. Due to the age of the woman, these lesions are likely considered as age-progressive and not indicative of a specific labor or activities. In both cases described above, women share the same burial space with newborns, children, and other adults, in graves that were originally constructed to hold more than one, likely affined, individual, so suggesting family groupings.

The Byzantine cemetery at Spata in Attica (central Greece) was also connected to a church, that of Saints Peter and Paul, and was next to an agrarian area operating in the same period.[39] More specifically, the cemetery was organized around the church with two parallel rows of adjacent graves on a north-south orientation in front the church's entry. The only four cist graves of the cemetery (the other 111 were tile-covered graves) were located in the main church (one cist) and in the rows at the entry of the church (three cists). Primary burials and deposits of disturbed remains were found in both grave types and all locations in the burial ground. Women were found in both burial and grave types. Of particular interest is the collective burial in the main church's cist grave that included the skeletal remains of two women, one man, two juveniles and two individuals of indeterminate sex thus resembling the collective burials from Xironomi described above. The prominent location of these women contrasts with the location of men's burials in the cists at the church's entry zone, though both were in visible areas of the funerary space. Men and women at this rural cemetery exhibit similar frequencies in dental pathologies (**Table 7.2**); similarly, individuals unearthed in cists and tile-covered graves or inside and outside the church do not display differences in the frequencies of dental lesions. All the above

suggest that grave typology, topographic distribution, and body disposal were consistent for women, men, and subadults; they do not reveal particular distinctions by sex, and that women shared a similar lifestyle with men. Finally, both examples from Xironomi and Spata demonstrate that women were equally treated in the mortuary sphere as integral parts of the community and of family groupings in prominent or less prominent areas of the Byzantine cemetery. Similar cases of collective, family burials are reported from Panakton, Abdera and Rhodes.[40]

There now follows and in more detail the case of ordinary women from a Byzantine, urban cemetery in Thebes (Boeotia, Central Greece). Byzantine times were flourishing ones for Boeotia; during that period, Thebes became the seat of the General of the Theme of Hellas and an important commercial and economic center with powerful landowners specializing in agriculture and stock-breeding.[41] The city also developed one of the most important silk industries of the Byzantine State.[42] Excavation conducted in 2002–2003 at Zeggini and Iokastis Streets in the center of the city[43] brought to light part of a Byzantine church. A total of 39 graves were excavated in the main church, the narthex and around the church: most of them were unfurnished or looted. The excavation also brought to light a pit with human bones that could have been used for the secondary deposition of skeletal elements during the post-mortem manipulation of the deceased. Grave offerings, although very few, include coins and objects of adornment that are dated to the 12th–13th centuries; the typology and high quality of the offerings as well as the grave typology for some of them suggest that at least the burials in vaulted graves inside the church and at its close proximity belonged to high status individuals and their families.

In order to gain a better insight into the place of women unearthed at this Byzantine church and better explore their status, it is important to provide first a general description of the osteological assemblage and its distribution across grave typology and topography. Human skeletal remains were analyzed from 26 out of 39 excavated graves and the pit. A minimum of 151 individuals were identified, of whom 128 were adults and 23 were subadults. Due to the high fragmentation and commingling of bones, in particular for those unearthed from vaulted graves, sex determination was possible only for 39 adults with women representing 41% of them (16 females and 23 males). Similarly, age-at-death estimation was possible for 15 out 128 adults: eight were young (20–35 years) and seven were middle-aged (35–50 years). The conjoined examination of age-at-death and sex showed only two young women, as well as one young and eight middle-aged men. The preservation of the bones and the difficulty in individuating those belonging to the same skeleton did not allow stature estimation for women; it is noteworthy however that men's stature (173 cm, n = 5) is among the highest when compared to other Byzantine samples (**Table 7.1**).

Pits (n = 7) and tile-covered (n = 12) graves held 45 individuals, vaulted (n = 7) graves were used for the inhumation of bones belonging to at least

102 individuals and the pit included the remains of four adults. This distribution shows that the average number of individuals held in modest graves was 2.3 while the average number of individuals included in elaborate graves was seven times higher (14.6 individuals). The distribution of women's bones in the graves shows that: women and men were equally represented in vaulted graves (14 females and 13 males) located in visible and prominent areas of the church and the graveyard; women were underrepresented in modest graves (two females and ten males); and the remains of the two young women mentioned above were collected in vaulted graves. Among 14 primary burials included in the sample, none belonged to a female suggesting that women were largely subject to post-mortem disturbance and the commingling of their bones.

The distribution of women across grave types correlates with that of subadults. Among 23 juveniles, 16 were found in vaulted graves and seven were found in modest ones (four from tile-covered and three from pits). None of the subadults was found in primary position. Age distribution for subadults is different across grave types; the skeletal remains of three children (one at five and two at seven years old) were found in pits and tile-covered graves (graves 4, 13, 17); the rest were part of the commingled remains recovered from vaulted graves and their age ranged from infants to adolescents. All the above indicate the intentional gathering of women's and juveniles' bones in vaulted graves suggestive of family grouping. In addition, eight cases of congenital malformations of the spine collected only in vaulted graves (two cases of spina bifida of the sacrum and six cases of sacralization of the fifth lumbar vertebra)[44] further support the hypothesis that these individuals were affined.

The females from Thebes are characterized by low frequency of caries (4.5%) and antemortem tooth loss (7.4%) suggesting a generally good oral health, low consumption of cariogenic foodstuffs and an adequate diet; these frequencies are similar to those of males. When examined across grave types, the frequencies of caries and antemortem tooth loss/AMTL for women and men buried in vaulted graves are similar. This result is in agreement with what has been observed for all Byzantine samples examined here according to which females and males exhibit similar frequencies of dental caries; it contrasts, however, to the observation that females from urban settings exhibit significantly higher frequencies of caries and antemortem tooth loss/AMTL than males (**Table 7.3**). Bearing in mind that the representation of females in vaulted (n = 14) and modest (n = 2) graves is unequal for the cemetery of Thebes, as is the representation of their dental remains, it is not possible to explore differences between elite and non-elite women across grave types and by extension burial location.

Cranial porosities are recorded for both sexes. Three individuals exhibit cribra orbitalia and they all came from vaulted graves (one female from grave 23, one female and one male from grave 26); in all cases, the lesion was of moderate expression and healed. Porotic hyperostosis affects more males

than females both in the overall adult sample and in the vaulted graves but the difference is not statistically significant.

Turning to LEH, the teeth of adults gathered in vaulted graves (33.8%, 88/260) were significantly more affected than of those buried in modest graves (18%, 16/89, $p = 0.0047$). LEH exhibits significantly higher frequencies for females (37.6%, 41/109) than for males (26.3%, 63/240) in the general sample ($p = 0.0315$) and in vaulted graves (for the latter, not at a significant level). This contrasts to the result showing females and males from urban settings are equally affected by LEH. Thus, it seems that women and adults buried in vaulted, more elaborate, graves were generally more stressed early in life than the rest of this urban population but they were capable to overcome stress and survive thanks to a healthy diet.

Inter-cemetery variations are also observed between the females from Thebes and those from the rural cemeteries of Spata and Xironomi. Overall, women had a low reliance on cariogenic foodstuffs as suggested from the low frequencies of caries, but the Boeotian women, although from different socioeconomic contexts, had a better oral health than women from the countryside of Attica, as suggested by the significantly lower frequencies of AMTL for the former. In addition, women from Boeotia were significantly less stressed during childhood than women from rural Spata, as evidenced by the lower frequencies of LEH for the former. Limited evidence on women's ages does not allow further investigating the relationship between poor child health and early death for those living in the cities and the countryside.

To conclude, the gendered reading of these eloquent bones of women is contextual and not straightforward. Information about women outside the traditional sources is drawn more recently from skeletal remains. The conjoined examination of this information allows for some interesting observations regarding female health and identity in Byzantium. Variations in the frequencies of skeletal health indicators between sexes and across settlements suggests more pronounced gender differences in the urban lifestyles than in the countryside. The hardships of the rural life lead women to experience more frequent periods of stress early in life, but at the same time, they were able to enjoy the same diet as men, suggesting a certain degree of social equality. On the other hand, women in the cities had probably better living conditions but a more unhealthy, inadequate diet and poor oral health than men and the average countryside inhabitants. These variations imply more pronounced social asymmetries in urban settings: such could be related either to differential access to foods and variability in dietary behavior in adult life – with women from the cities consuming more cariogenic foods than men, or even to the consumption of softer, more refined foods than those consumed by males.[45] One possible explanation could be that women were highly involved in food-processing work and snacking between meals that resulted in higher caries rates,[46] thus implying a more pronounced gendered labor division in cities. Another

factor to consider is urban economic activities and by extension social complexity in the cities; it is possible that women from specific social and economic standings had an inadequate diet and poorer oral health than other social groups or men. More contextual and multidisciplinary studies are required to further explore these hypotheses. Finally, despite the fact that socioeconomic factors seem to play a central role in the expression of women's identity no matter the examined period, a possible shift towards the adoption of a more adequate diet by women, and by extension, a greater equality between females and males, from the Byzantine period onwards, is hypothesized.

Gender differences in keeping with women's experiences are displayed in burial practices. Mortuary treatment for women living in the countryside was more homogenous and followed similar customs with the rest of the population. At the same time, the construction of family structures is highly noticeable through the practice of burying infants and adults together, thus underlining "the centrality of the family,"[47] not only to the village, but to the urban society as well. The average number of individuals (including females) per grave does indicate several inter-site variations, so suggesting that family collective burials[48] and the need for accommodating commemorative services was dependent on socioeconomic status. On the other hand, the slight increase in the number of collective burials over time could likely echoing a strengthening of family links[49] and the increasing status of women as wives and mothers; their decisive role in the household is described in textual sources[50] but is also visible in the mortuary sphere. It is possible that this change in the status of women was accompanied by a gradual improvement of their dietary choices, but this hypothesis needs further investigation.

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Part III

Earthly delights, holy concerns

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8 The 'transcendental' role of woman in Early Patristics (theological and philosophical insights)

Nevena Dimitrova

"Bridging" is probably the term that best describes a text dedicated to the perception of women of everyday life by Church Fathers. The mission and vocation of women is that of balancing between the extremes of life. As such, they occupy a special place in Byzantine society. On the one hand, there are sources that confirm women's confinement at home as housekeepers, child bearers, and housewives. On the other hand, there are texts pointing at their freedom of moving in the cities, participation in church or economic deeds, freedom of wearing jewelries and ornaments, participating at banquets, and others.[1]

Petlomaa mentions that the research interest in Byzantine women emerging in 1980 was dedicated to the imperial women and to the lives of female saints.[2] The attitude towards woman that includes the whole variety from saint to sinner, in the frame of Christian worldview, could be traced in Church fathers' views. On the one hand, the concern with the "*ontological*" status of virgin, widow, deaconess, or prophetess, but also prostitute, companion, etc.; on the other hand was the social role of woman as a housekeeper, wife, mother but always in its virtuous/ethical connotation. Related to these are the ways early patristic texts address womanhood in everyday life as well as the symbolic notion of femininity.

The transformative attitude from Eve to Mother of God is in itself the "bridge" a Christian woman represents and so it is observed by Church fathers. A woman is a body of the man (*Apostolic Constitutions* 3.9.1-4),[3] it is said already in the New Testament; Eve in the position of a secondary gender, as the image of the image finds its transformation in Gregory of Nyssa's sister and teacher Macrina the Younger. In this text, the focus will be on Maximus the Confessor and other early Church fathers, and their attitude towards women.

The woman, regarded as the "passive" participant in starting a family, where the man is considered to be the one who gives birth, appears to be the "active" element in the family life, where education, care, order in the house are among her duties. This is one of the reasons why women have their place in the Father's writings as models of behaviour: there are eulogies created for their mothers, sisters, and women who inspired them. Not only can we call

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a woman's position bridge between the extremities in life; it is also the way Byzantine thinkers like Maximus the Confessor would recognize the mission of created human in the world – *bridging between the immanent and transcendent*. Human beings have the task to overcome the universal division following the Fall in order to achieve likeness to God. Another vision of the mediating role of human beings we find in Psellos, where he even regards the parts of the soul as mediated by human (where practical soul is identified with woman and theoretical – as a part, belonging to the man). Most of the Church Fathers ground their views of women on Saint Paul's statements and with time, the attitude towards women as submissive to men grow stronger. Alexandrian school in general considers gender equality, while Antiochian School regards only man as created in the image of Christ.

Church Fathers describe lives of women that are members of their families: they are the image of virtuous life such as Macrina the Younger, Gorgonia, also the mother of late Byzantine scholar Michael Psellos. Interestingly, in the image of Holy Virgin, they all see the Mother of God and as such, Christian women gain a higher status. Nevertheless, the woman is still feared and kept away from male occupations. When the topic is focused on women and their role in everyday life according to Church Fathers, it is apparent that we have to look deep into the *patristic* versus *'matristics'* arguments and positions. The idea is not to define a non-existent group classification of female presence in human history, but rather to emphasize on the existence of "desert mothers" with significant role in constructing the feminine part of the world. One of the toposes women naturally belong to but are refused a free role in, is religious institutional life.[4] Women are not present in history of thought as authors, but as heroines in men's works where we learn about women's role in society, political, economic, and intellectual life; one exclusion would be the treatise of Eupraxia Komnene (1106–1172), being the first female author of a treatise on medicine (*Alimma*), parts of which are kept in Library of Medici in Florence.

Starting from Antiquity to Christian understanding of womanhood, we refer to Philo, Clement of Alexandria, John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory Nazianzen, and Maximus the Confessor; more specifically their perception of God's Image and male/female distinction. The attitude towards women in Early Christianity, of course, inherits the basic views of ancient writers. Women are not allowed to administer the sacraments in Church, or to teach religion, even if they can do charitable work. Women are regarded as a second sex because of Eve's creation after Adam. Nevertheless, the passage from Eve to Mother of God rehabilitates the status of woman as image of God.[5] Gregory Nazianzen (329–389) presents women as "eikones" – images of God, since Gregory takes care not to represent God according to gender. He argues that women should be treated justly on the basis that they are God's eikones, revealing the *eikon* dynamically in both body and soul. In Basil's *The Great Hexaemeron*, which Gregory praises and Gregory Nyssen is reported to have edited, women are mentioned as being created eikones.[6]

Unlike Nyssen, Gregory Nazianzen does not state that the image is genderless; nevertheless, it is clear that this is his intention throughout his work. However, Gregory believes that the human person images God both individually and collectively – he does not envisage an androgynous human person at creation, rather, he understands that human nature represents a single unity which is restored in Christ. "There is one maker of man and woman, one sod of clay for both, one eikon, one law, one death, one resurrection, in the same way we were born from man and woman" (*Oratio* 37.6). He also speaks about "manly woman," which is connected to the understanding in Church Fathers that male and female are terms directly connected to certain characteristics. Courage and intellect are opposed respectfully to weakness and ignorance; but persons can move between them. To Gregory, women bear the image of God as long as God is genderless. For him, gender is accidental, not essential. The consequences of this are that whilst humans are God's eikones, they are gendered as creatures, not as eikones of God.[7]

The teaching about androgenic of the first man is present in almost all ancient religions. The most difficult thing in this is the unity of the two natures in one person: the fact that was difficult to understand for the ancient religions with their rationalism but finds its solution in Christian revelation. The relation between the two natures in Christ and the way male and female natures are bond together in the first man as long as Adam is the pre-image of Christ and the two natures in him give the metaphysical explanation of the unity of the two natures in the first man.

Along with this is the teaching of creation of woman as Church. Church is the unity in God of the two or many persons. Until the creation of women, humanity was represented by one person, although with two natures, but that is why it was not yet a Church. Only with the creation of the other person, Eve, and through the unity with her, Adam, realizes this great unity and establishes the beginning of Church. Saint Clement says that God created human as man and woman. Man is Christ, woman is Church (1 *Corinthians* 11.13). In the first man, the two natures are united and not the two sexes. In him, there is no such differentiation, polarized male and female physiological and psychological differences. He is not bisexual but above-sexual. Only with the birth of Eve, Adam receives his being as a man, the birth of Eve as a woman is the birth of Adam as man.[8]

It was already Plato that insisted on equality of men and women concerning the access to education. (*Republic*, 451D-7B.) According to established scholar's studies,[9] in the Late Antiquity the attitude towards women was based on their weaker nature and thus regarded as subordinated to men. Women have been educated by their men in order to share the domestic and social responsibility but the sphere of their competence could not surpass the doors of their homes. Some of the Church Fathers raised an opposition towards such claims. Gregory Nazianzen in his *Oration* to the funeral of his sister Gorgonia says: "O nature of woman overcoming that of man in the common struggle for salvation, and demonstrating that the distinction between male and female is one of body not of soul!"[10]

Philo of Alexandria (20 BC – 50AD) places the sexual division between male and female in the irrational soul.[11] The rational part of the soul is not associated by Philo with male/female polarity (Philo, 19). Neither God, nor Logos, nor the rational soul of man is involved in the sphere of male and female. It is part of the mortal sphere of the created world. So, it is not connected with the Nous (mind), but with Logos. With appearance of Eve, man is tempted to sexual desire. In his current situation, man is symbolising *nous*, and woman is symbolising *aesthesis*. To Philo, woman is the beginning of evil: he considers her along with vices and evils throughout the Old Testament. God first created the mind and then the sense perception. When Philo refers to the sense-perceptible world as female and the realm of mind as male, however, it is clear that he is using the categories male and female quite differently. According to this second usage, female refers to the material, sense-perceptible.[12] The other way of "overcoming the womanly" and becoming a male is the way that leads from duality to oneness – in other words, from sense perception to the operations of the mind. In such progress, though the unity is beyond male in terms of polarity of male-female, it is beyond sexuality. Philo associates male with reason, and female with sense perception.

Clement of Alexadria (150–215) treats the question of women on a basis of moderate position and on the count of philosophical argumentation ("On Marriage", *Stromata* Book 2, chapter 23). According to Clement men and women are equal regarding their souls, which he borrows from Plato (he ranks marriage among outward good things, providing for the perpetuity of our race, and handing down as a torch a certain perpetuity to children's children), but at the same time Clement claims that women are subordinated to men because of their physical differences. Eve, to him, is the source of all evil. However, nature has adapted us for marriage, as is evident from the structure of our bodies, which are male and female. They constantly proclaim the command: increase and replenish (*Genesis* 1:28. *Miscelania*, Book 2: 23.139).[13]

John Chrysostom (347–407) says that wordless creatures help man, but how much more help him the woman – a completed, perfect, and beautiful creature, and she offers a consolation. Indeed, for his consolation [of man] she was created (*Genesis* 15,1). His treatise "*On Virginity*" claims that, in marriage, the soul lives not for itself but for the others and in defining this he is influenced not so much from the Stoic *ataraxia* (stolidity) but from the understanding about Christian love. According to him, the good wife could be better than a monk and even sometimes more virtuous. Even though, for Chrysostom viriginity should be preferable to marriage (Major treatises on Virginity).[14]

Gregory of Nyssa (335-395) sees the spiritual life as overcoming, transcending gender and sexuality. Macrina the Younger (327–380), his sister, was a great spiritual support for Gregory. He presents the dialogue with her in a work that deserves to be much better known than it is, titled *On the Soul*

and the Resurrection (*PG* 46, 12a, 16a), where in a manner of Plato's Phaedo, the immortality of the soul is discussed. Macrina was well educated and knowledgeable in Stoicism, Epicureanism, and medical theory. *The Life of Macrina* is the first biography of a woman, although in the words of Gregory himself, Macrina couldn't be called woman at all because she transcended her nature. Not only did she overcame the weakness of gender but she rose "above nature as a whole." In this work, the true self is presented as the rational soul which can survive bodily death. The overcoming of passions and emotions is a sign of going beyond gender but also it is like coming closer to God-Christ who is neither male, nor female. Basil the Great (Macrina's elder brother), commenting on *Genesis* I, 26 explicitly says, "Also woman possesses the characteristic of being created in the image of God, in the same way as man possesses this characteristic. Their natures are equal in honour, equal are their virtues, equal their profits and similar their condemnation."[15] Basil considers the souls, that is the rational minds, of both man and woman made in the image of God. Macrina's brother Gregory of Nyssa's exegesis of *Genesis I*, 26–28 is in favour of the spiritual equality of man and woman as well and is an evidence of this. Woman is as fully a human being as man is. God's image, which can only be understood spiritually, has nothing to do with gender. Those categories are merely applicable to the corporality of a human being.

Besides marriage, by the 4th and 5th centuries "philosophy" was especially applied to the Christian ascetic life, and eventually to monasticism.[16] The Early Neoplatonists considered life on earth inferior to a life free from the body and its surroundings in the material world. The position of the soul between intelligible and sensible realms that is typical for Later Platonists could be seen in Maximus the Confessor later in 7th century. Asceticism as a way of escape into the inner world of soul and gnosis, and to some extent, the negative attitude towards women is based on the fear that they distract men from the efforts of progressing in alienating from this world. Asceticism also equals practical philosophy and is connected to fasting.[17] As long as women were responsible for the preparation of food, food-related miracles also allowed them [women] to challenge the religious authority claimed by men. Can we say that the virgins practised a much more severe asceticism than other Christians? All the Fathers of the Church, beginning with Tertullian, speak of "stations," i.e. days of fasting and vigils in the Church. As a Montanist, Tertullian inclined to increase the number and severity of these stations, but did not add any particular obligations for virgins in this regard. Cyprian repeated the same teaching, seeing in this combination between fasting and alms-giving a twofold title to obtain the remission of our sins. When he recommends alms-giving to virgins, he seems to be addressing well-to-do persons who can easily give to the poor from their superfluous wealth. The asceticism taught in the treatises on virginity of that period of time is related to the usual questions: make-up, clothes, ornaments, modesty and continence, the sins of the tongue, and above all, the temptation

of pride. Virgins inclined, indeed, to extol themselves above other women because of the generally recognized principle of the superiority of virginity over marriage.

The essential aspect of the spiritual life of virgins is properly mystical, a mystery in the sense of *Ephesians* 5:21-33: a marriage of the virgin to Christ. Of course, a marriage to Christ presented certain earthly advantages also. It meant status in Church and society, and also came to involve tax-exemptions. This union was free from the usual worries of marriage – subjection to a husband, child-bearing and raising, the burdens of housewives, and some of the dangers and inconveniences caused by accidents, disease, and death.

Maximus the Confessor (580–620) defines the position of human beings as mediators between the extremes of the divided universal hypostasis. This represents the central role of the created being – it is a being with a given perspective to align the logos of nature with the tropos of existence, or in fulfilling the task of the image to become likeness of the Creator. The motive of searching for the mean between extremes is not new to the Christian way of thinking. It already existed in the ancient philosophical texts. What interests us here is the role of woman as transcending bond; the creation of Eve in art history represents this aspect. Eve is in the mediatory position between man and God, between immanent and transcendent. Far from any Trinitarian context (there are texts on the Trinitarian doctrine applied to the creation of Adam and Eve) this relation here determines the mediatory role of woman between immanent and transcendent making her unique position of transforming "extremes" into "means" if we use the language of Maximus the Confessor.

He also talks about the existence of the Trinity as Monad and about the midway between extremes of existence. There he says "extreme" (*akron*) is: And God said, let us make man according to our image and [1401B] likeness. A "mean" (*meson*) is: And God made man, male and female He made them. Again, an "extreme" is: In Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female. That these extremes and means are unequal – since the latter have "male and female", whereas the former do not – is due to the productive and containing power of the divine energy.[18]

The differentiation of sexes as a whole is regarded as part of the broken universal hypostasis of the world after the fall: Creator and creation; intelligible and sensible; heaven and earth; paradise and the inhabited world; and male and female.

> Through this potential, consistent with the purpose behind the origination of divided beings, man was called to achieve within himself the mode of their completion, and so bring to light the great mystery of the divine plan, realizing in God the union of the extremes which exist among beings, by harmoniously advancing in an ascending sequence from the proximate to the remote and from the inferior to the superior…In Jesus Christ the difference between male and female does not

> exist anymore. He showed us as properly and truly to be simply human beings, thoroughly formed according to Him, bearing His image intact and completely unadulterated, touched in no way by any marks of corruption.[19]

There is this spectrum of both positive and negative arguments in dealing with the question of the "second sex" in Maximus the Confessor. The symbolic power of female/woman in the exegesis on biblical texts in *Questions and Answers* to Thalassios, where woman is regarded as symbolizing the virtues. He describes the role of woman in a series of symbolic allegories: he says there that the head of the woman is man, the head of man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God. Maximus begins this response in a way that can be traced in different writings of him, regarding the practical, theoretical, and mystagogical level of spiritual hermeneutics. This is related to the different parts of the soul, inherited from ancient philosophy through Evagrios. We quote some of his words:

> Woman is called the disposition for the practical activity of the mind… and the woman is the aesthesis/ the sense. Every woman should have on her head the power of reason/logos, because of the habit, sense, thought, that should not be uncovered of reason and noetical differentiation, nobles, and knowledge…

It appears that habit, sense, and thought are the names of women in this chapter. To state the matter succinctly, through "women" (meaning love that is the ultimate end of virtues – the end that is the ecstasy and union with the Good), he showed that the goal of the virtues is love, which is the unfailing pleasure and indivisible union of those who participate through their longing in what is good by nature. Linking this to the virtue ethics from 20th century, the origins of this latter seems to be here, from Aristotle through Saint Maximus, woman is the disposition of the mind and virtue!

Dealing with extremes is actually the role women play in history of humanity. The place of women is and has always been in-between, balancing the extremities of existence – their dedication has been recognized in acquiring the balanced status within and outside their lives, families, homes, communities, etc. The feminine, which had been placed in an inferior role by both the Greek and the Hebrew worlds, made a dramatic and powerful bid for a place in the sun of consciousness in 12th century in the West. The loss of feminine energy, with its warm vitality, is not difficult to document. It is evident in our culture's mythic traditions, in our linguistic poverty, in our lack of feeling for human relationships, and finally, in our hunger for meaning. Meaning is the realm of the feminine. Without secure femininity in our interior psychological world, no contentment or meaning is possible. We have alienated ourselves from this fact of our being. We burden ourselves with numerous different demands or expectations, which disguise our

simple need to be and have meaning. Still, we have experienced moments of peace, which remind us of the essential quality of meaning. The simplest meal is worth remembering for a lifetime if it is the carrier of meaning and human connection.

Even before its masculine repression and overpowering of the feminine in this specific historical moment, the attitude of the Church was clear. The Christian Church has lived with a Trinitarian view of reality for most of its theological life. It fits well into a masculine mentality. The inevitable consequence of a Trinitarian viewpoint is the exclusion of the feminine element. It follows us, demanding to be included in our life and given a place of dignity. As Judith Herrin points out, Hildegard of Bingen and Christine de Pisan may be superior to woman writers of medieval Greek, but the range of Byzantine activities is perhaps broader, their social prominence is more marked, and their impact on their male relatives may have been tougher. They also form an unbroken record from the 4th to the 15th century. Steven Runciman may even have got it right when he mused, "I wonder if it was the strength of Byzantine women that kept the empire going so long."[20]

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Notes

1 For more see: A. Kazhdan, Women at Home, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 52(1998), 4–5.

2 L. M. Peltomaa, Gender and Byzantine Studies from the Viewpoint of Methodology, *Anzeiger der philosophisch-historischen Klasse* 1(140), 25.

3 P. Cox Miller, *Women in Early Christianity. Translations from Greek Texts*, The Catholic University of America Press: Washington DC 2005, 66.

4 On the contemporary tensions in Orthodox views on women ordination in the church see P. Kalaitzidis, The Eschatological Understanding of Tradition in Contemporary Orthodox Theology and Its Relevance for Today's Issues, C. Dickinson (ed.), *The Shaping of Tradition. Context and Normativity*, Peeters: Leuven 2013, 308–309.

5 See more about Mariology in Peltomaa's investigation of studies on Byzantine women and gender in Peltomaa, Gender and Byzantine Studies, 30.

6 G. Thomas, *The Image of God in the Theology of Gregory of Nazianzus*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2019, 77.

7 Thomas, *The Image of God in the Theology of Gregory of Nazianzus*, 80, 82.

8 For the birth of Eve in "deep sleep" where Adam is like the matter or the flesh from which God makes the woman by his own will –not by the will or reason of Adam. The other sinless birth that of Christ is again without human volition. In relation with giving birth of individuals there is also a language differentiation of flesh and body in the Bible (flesh– body). So, flesh is the common substance of the living being while the body is the individual organism. (1 *Corinthians* 15:39). In the time of birth of woman Adam was in unconscious state, it was in his sleep, the first man was just flesh, not yet a body, only in the time of birth of woman the first man was "in ecstasy."

9 G. Gould, Women in the Writings of the Fathers: Language, Belief, and Reality, W.J. Sheils– D. Wood (eds), *Studies in Church History. Women in the Church*, vol.27, Blackwell: Oxford 1990.

10 M.-A. Calvet-Sebasti (ed.), *Gregoire de Nazianze.Discours 6–12*, Sources Chrétiennes 405, Éditions du CERF: Paris 1995, 76, Oration 37.7. Adam did sin no less than Eve: "How then do you demand Chastity, while thou dost not yourself observe it? How do you demand that which thou dost not give? How, though you are equally a body, do you legislate unequally? If you enquire into the worse — The Woman Sinned, and so did Adam (*Genesis* 3:6). The serpent deceived them both; and one was not found to be the stronger and the other the weaker. But do you consider the better? Christ saves both by His Passion. Was He made flesh for the Man? So, He was also for the woman. Did He die for the Man? The Woman also is saved by His death. He is called of the seed of David; (*Romans 1:3*) and so perhaps you think the Man is honoured; but He is born of a Virgin, and this is on the Woman's side. They two, He says, shall be one Flesh; so, let the one flesh have equal honour. And Paul legislates forchastity by His example. How, and in what way? This Sacrament is great, he says, But I speak concerning Christ and the Church; (*Ephesians* 5:32).

11 R. Baer, *Philo's Use of the Categories Male and Female*, Brill: Leiden 1970.

12 Philo sees the inclination towards physical sphere as weakness and the leading of the body towards the mind as perfection and a way to unity of existence. He adds to this the transformation of "woman to a virgin" where he calls virgin as number 7: the perfect number according to him. The process is called "becoming a virgin." R. Baer, *Philo's Use of the Categories Male and Female*, Brill: Leiden 1970, 51.

13 Cox Miller, *Women in Early Christianity*, 262.

14 Cox Miller, *Women in Early Christianity*, 268.

15 For Macrina's Life see, A. Silvas, *Macrina the Younger Philosopher of God*, Brepols: Turnhout 2008, particularly 109, 147, 163. C. B. Christakis, A Woman Christian Sage of the Fourth Century: Macrina the Virgin – Philosopher, *Theologia* 66/2(1995), 330–361. D. McDonald, Macrina: The Fourth Cappadocian? P. Allen and others (eds), *Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church*, Australian Catholic University: Queensland 1998.

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19 N. Constas (ed., trans.), *Maximus the Confessor. On Difficulties in Church Fathers. THE AMBIGUA*, vol. II, Harvard University Press: London 2014, 103–105, 115.
20 J. Herrin, *Unrivalled Influence. Women and Empire in Byzantium*, Princeton University Press: New Jersey 2013, 10.

9 Interpreting the female dances of "Ainoi" (Laudes) in the Post-Byzantine painting

Magdalini Parcharidou

"Ainoi," "Laudes," or "Pasa Pnoe" is the term given to the last three psalms of the Psaltery, that is the 148th, 149th, and 150th Psalms. They compose a poetic item, which was annotated and depicted from the Early Christian period.[1] Their main content is the hymn, praise, and doxology of God by all creatures and especially by humans for immortality and the harmony that coheres human beings. The solemn glorification of Christ, according to the lyrics of the three psalms, is expressed in various ways, especially with music and dance of a religious character, as it is described in the verses "*Let them praise His name with dancing and sing to Him with timbrel and harp*" (psalm 149.3) and "*Praise Him with timbrel and dance, praise Him with strings and pipe*" (psalm 150.4).

Although "Laudes" were possibly depicted from the 5th century,[2] dance is almost non-existent in the Byzantine iconography of the item.[3] Dancing is painted restrained and hieratic in the miniatures of the illuminated manuscripts[4] of Utrecht (Utrecht, Rijksuniversiteit ms 32, 820–830) and Stuttgart (Stuttgart, Württemberg Landesbibliothek folio 23, circa 830), while more intense and cordial is depicted in the manuscript of Saint Petersburg (olim Leningrad, Public Library, 1252 FVI, 1397) and in an ivory casket from the Dumbarton Oaks Collection (1403–1404). In the Utrecht Psalter (folio 83v), three young women musicians, with long loose hair, play lyres and drums, while moving rhythmically towards a church, interpreted as the Sion of the Psalms verses 149.1.3. In the Stuttgart Psalter, an analogues miniature shows the hieratic movement of a young woman, with long loose hair and maracas (*seistra*), in front of a church, while in the lower part dances a young boy with a scarf (Psalm 150, folio 163r). The individual dance of a young woman, accompanied by two musicians, illustrates the Psalm verse 150.4 in the Psalter of Saint Petersburg.[5] In the ivory casket from the Dumbarton Oaks Collection,[6] which is connected with the celebrations that accompanied the receiving of the city of Thessaloniki by John VII Paleologos as co-emperor with the principal emperor Manuel II Paleologos (1391–1425),[7] the two emperors and their families are depicted together with seven musicians, and two female dancers who enliven the festivities. The dancers are swirling, one with her arms akimbo holding a scarf and the

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other one with a veil behind her head. Their hair is bound up and the finely woven clothes they wear make their elegant movement and body anatomy translucid.

In Byzantine monumental paintings, female dance is not included in the composition of Ainoi. Usually, male dances are depicted, as in the chapel of Chrelis in the Rila monastery, Bulgaria (1334/1335), where the dancers move intensely, in a circle, connected to each other with their hands braided behind their backs;[8] furthermore, male dance is depicted in the katholikon (main church) of Lesnovo monastery, North Macedonia (1349), where we may recognize a type of double dance, portraying psalm 149.3.[9] The male dance is consistently depicted in the Post-Byzantine period, for example in the monasteries of Varlaam in Meteora (1565),[10] Iviron in Mount Athos (1795, repainted in 1888),[11] and Holy Apostles at Kleinovos, Kalambaka (1820),[12] but this isn't the dominant way this is depicted. In the Late Post-Byzantine period, dance may appear mixed, i.e., of men and women, as in the katholikon of the monastery of Holy Gregoriou in Mount Athos (1779, **Figure 9.1**),[13] or with the additional participation of children, as in

Figure 9.1 A mixed dance by young men and women. Women are crowned with exotic feathers and floral jewelry, according to the ancient custom of the Spring celebration and the wedding ceremony. Wall-painting, Monastery of Holy Gregoriou, katholikon (main church), Liti, Mount Athos, 1779 (© The Holy Mountain Athos, The Monastery of Holy Gregoriou).

Figure 9.2 Elegant young women wearing precious embroidered dresses of Italian aesthetic and dance round, holding each others wrist. Wall-painting, church of Saint Dimitrios, Klimatia near Ioannina, middle of 16th century (© Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Ephorate of Antiquities of Ioannina).

the Panagia Acheiropoeitos of the Kosinitsa monastery in the mountain of Pangaion (1858–1865).[14] Rarely, independent dances of men, women (and children) may be presented separately, in the same composition, as in the monastery of Saint John in Vomvokou, Naupaktos (1703–1722),[15] or in the church of the Annunciation at Aroania, Kalavryta (1703, separately men and women).[16]

The first depictions of the unmixed female dances of Ainoi are found only at the middle of the 16th century,[17] in monuments connected with the so called School of NW Greece and the workshop of the painters from Linotopi village; the Ainoi compositions in the monasteries of Vatheia on the island of Euboea (1556–1565),[18] of Filanthropinon on the island (Nisaki) of Ioannina (1560)[19] and of Smederevo, Serbia (end of 16th - beginning of 17th century),[20] as well as in the church of Saint Dimitrios at Klimatia in Ioannina [1558–1560 (?), **Figure 9.2**], [21] mirror the social conditions and the real dances of the era, and, at the same time, the attempt to connect art with the contemporary everyday life.

The depictions of the item may be distinguished in two types, in group dances and in individual dances. Describing schematically this distinction, we may support that group dance expresses the collective opinions and aspects of the community; the intensity of these dances, especially in the

workshop of the brothers Kondaris' and in the paintings by the Linotopites painters is complemented or explained by a single young dancer, who swirls around her body shaking scarves, as it is described in Psalms 150.4b, 150.6, or even 148.11–12. These single figures originate from the dancing women depicted in banquets, festivals, or celebrations such as the wedding ceremonies on Byzantine illuminated manuscripts and minor art objects,[22] and which can be related to the improvisation of the first dancer in group dances or even, may be interpreted as a synopsis of the dance groups.

Morphologically, the female dance usually has a rectilinear or circular shape and is represented next to either the hymn of the human groups of Psalm 148 or to the captivity of the kings of Psalm 149, as a natural continuation of the flow of the Psalm verses. In most cases it is accompanied by verses 149.3, 150.4, or even 150.3b.5[23] and includes a quite number of dancers, depending on the space offered and the will of the artist or the sponsor to highlight the theme. For example, in the monastery of Saint George Armas (1637), there are four dancers;[24] in Vatheia, six (both on the island of Euboea); in Megali Panagia in Samos island (1596) there are at least seven[25] (**Figure 9.3**), and in Filanthropinon monastery on the island (Nisaki) of Ioannina they are more than ten.

Dances, according to the way dancers linked together, may be recognized as knit (*detos*), double (*diplos*) or *zonaradikos*. During the knit, dancers

Figure 9.3 Young women dancing a type of a double dance. Wall-painting, Monastery of Megali Panagia, katholikon (main church), Koumaradeika, island of Samos, 1596 (© Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Ephorate of Antiquities of Samos and Ikaria).

hold each other wrist, with their hands crossed in front, as in the monastery of Dekoulou in Oitylo in laconian (Mesa/ Inner) Mani (1765)[26] and in the church of Saint Sophia in Gournitsa (1700) in messinian (Exo/Outer) Mani,[27] where, based to the great number of relevant depictions, we may conclude that the knit is an old enough dance and also one of the favorites. A type of knit dance is *trata*, a local dance of Megara which takes place on Tuesday after Easter and seems to be depicted in the monastery of Panagia Faneromeni on the island of Salamina (1730).[28]

During the double dance, dancers are developed in two parallel rows, holding each other by alternating wrists, crosswise, and in dense correlation between them, as in Samos (**Figure 9.3**) and in the church of Saints Theodoroi at Kampos in messinian (Exo/Outer) Mani (1760).[29] According to recent research, it is performed, also currently, on Easter Tuesday, and it is very much venerated in many places of Greece,[30] reflecting, in addition to the joy of dancing, basic situations of existence, such as death and life, in their relationship with nature and the cycle of the metaphysical and the real time of the agricultural communities.

Zonaradikos dance owes its name to the belt dancers hold to connect to each other, as in the church of Saint Achilleios at Pentalofos, Kozani (1774)[31] and in the monastery of Strouni, dedicated to the Birth of Virgin Mary, nearby Acheron river (1830–1838).[32] This type of dance is also recorded in the church of Sveti Zchoveli in Mcxeta in Georgia (1784?), where some of the women dance individually, holding a scarf.[33] The iconographic testimony of Ainoi indicates the Antiquity of the dance and its wide dispersion, while emphasizing the symbolism of the gesture of belt-holding, and the presentation of the belt as symbol of the purity, prosperity and elegance of its owner.

However, the most common dance, based on the way dancers move, is *syrtos*.[34] Dancers usually hold each other from wrists and drag their steps clockwise, under the guidance of the first dancer. *Syrtos* is the most widespread type of dance since Antiquity, and is found in many variations throughout Greece. Sometimes, young women dancing the *syrtos* stand at a distance from each other, as in the church of Saint Dimitrios at Domenikon of Elassona, central Greece (beginning of 17th century)[35] and in the monastery of Seltsou near Arta (1697).[36] In the same type of dance, based on the dancers' movement, belongs the most lively version of *syrtos* in the chapel of Koukouzelissa on Mount Athos (1715),[37] where scholars recognized a variation of the Thracian *syrtos*.[38]

Another variation of *syrtos* consists by the folding of the arms at the height of the elbow, with intense movement of the bodies at the same time, as in most monuments painted by the Kondaris and Linotopites painters, for example in Klimatia and in the church of the Dormition of the Virgin at Elaphotopos, Ioannina (1615/1616, **Figure 9.2**),[39] as well as from other painters, for example in the monasteries of Saint Dimitrios Oktonias near Kymi, on the island of Euboea (1636)[40] and Saint Nikitas Ano Dolon, in

messinian (Exo/Outer) Mani (1752).[41] Variation of *syrtos* is the case when dancers move concentrated and hold each other tight by their elbows, in close physical contact, as if they were consisting a wall; this type may recognized in the monastery of the Philanthropinon on the island of Ioannina and at the church of Saint George in Nigrita, near Serres (second half of 18th century).[42]

There are also cases where dancers are hold by the shoulders with their arms bent, as in Vatheia on the island of Euboea (1556–1565), or they have their hands in stretch, as in the monastery of Saint George in Pološko, North Macedonia (1609).[43] In general, depending on the movement and the heat of the dance, and also on the improvisation and inspiration of the first dancer, it is usual to combine different ways of holding hands, for example from the wrists, elbows or shoulders. Such are most of the depictions of Ainoi painted by painters from Linotopi, or by others as Andreas Poritis in the church of the Dormition of the Virgin in Ligourio of Argolida (1701),[44] where it is noteworthy that one of the dancers is clapping her hands. Of special importance and interest, finally, is another dance, the *antikristos*, a face-to-face vibrant dance among couples, known from the Archbishopric church of Saint John in Nicosia, Cyprus (1744–1750).[45] This dance brings in mind the individual dances and, in a way, it is connected with the ability of the dancers for improvisation.

The movement and the various symbolism contained in dance may be accentuated, supplemented and clarified, in addition, by the clothing, jewelry and accessories of the dancers. The most significant of the accessories is the scarf. The scarf is held by the first dancer, as in the *syrtos* double dance at the monastery of Panagia Helmou in Kentro (ex Gaitses) in messinian (Exo/Outer) Mani (after 1780),[46] or also by the first and the last of the dancers, as at the church of Prophet Ilias at Kallianeika, also in messinian (Exo/Outer) Mani (1758).[47] Its significant role is denoted by its use in some types of dance, as in the churches of Saint Athanasios in Kleidonia near Ioannina[48] (1617, **Figure 9.4**) and of Saint Nicholas, Kozani (1730),[49] where the dancers hold each other with the mediation of a scarf. A round dance, where dancers hold each other with the mediation of scarves, is also depicted in the monastery of Kamena in Delvino, Albania (1674?) where the scarves are long and narrow,[50] and in the monastery of Hurezi, Romania (1693/94), where scarves are white and diligent, of noble style.[51] The scarf, a multi-significant accessory, as already observed, supports the creative improvisation of the dancers, while in some cases, it becomes a sacred object itself and replaces the Holy itself, so much that its possible absence even abolishes the act of dancing.[52]

The movement and the significance of the dance are also aided by the costumes of the dancers. Although varied, they are usually luxurious and reflect the noble austerity and prosperity of the participants, who wear their festive clothing, participating in a solemn gathering. The young women wear gold-embroidered, long tunics and above them short-sleeved chemises,

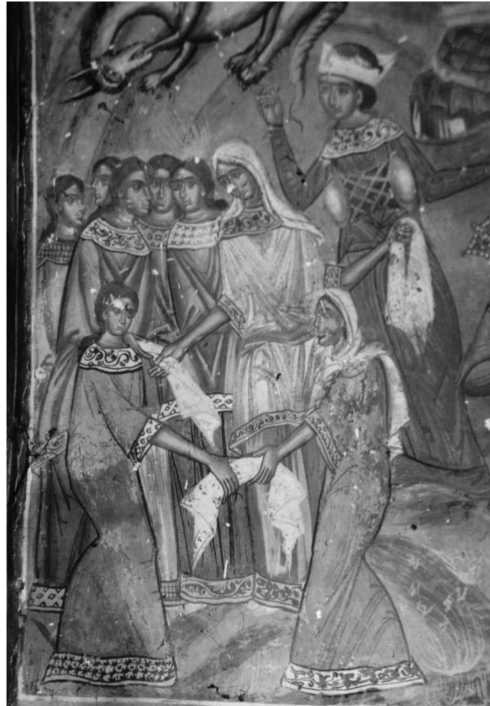

Figure 9.4 Dancers holding each other with the mediation of a scarf, following the improvisation of the first dancer. Wall-painting, church of Saint Athanasios, Kleidonia near Ioannina, 1617 (© Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Ephorate of Antiquities of Ioannina).

as in Vatheia, on the island of Euboea, and Samos; where they also wear a sleek short coat with pearl finishes, fur lining, and compact fabric buttons sewed on the chest in vertical lines, while in Klimatia, near Ioannina, they wear long-sleeved shirts and over them precious embroidered dresses of Italian aesthetic,[53] and long sleeveless vests. In Hurezi and Aninoasa (after 1677), both in Romania,[54] young girls wear dresses of European style, with a fabric belt, while a fancy lacy chemise of European style is worn by the noble lady at the church of the Nativity of Christ in Arbanassi in Bulgaria (1646).[55] Plain dresses, with V neck, and a silver or woven belt tied on the waist consist the costume of the young women in the church of Saint Nicholas in Kozani.

Even when women's clothing is simple, i.e., when it includes a plain, long dress and often a headscarf, as in the monastery of Vatheia in Euboea and at the church at Kallianeika in messinian (Exo/Outer) Mani, the frequently gilded and adorned with pearls fringes and necklines of their dress, and the headscarf, which falls loosely on their shoulders, as in the church

of the Zoodochos Pigi (Life-Giving Spring) in Zarnata in messinian (Exo/Outer) Mani (1787),[56] submits scarfs' use as a dance accessory.

The headscarf, in general, is a costume choice that dates back to Antiquity and corresponds to the modest appearance that a woman should have, according to church fathers, even in dance.[57] Over years, of course, it has become an object that reflects the elegance and financial surface of its owner; for example, in Klimatia, its transparency and luxurious material suggest its owner's relationship with the Venetian aristocracy.[58] At the same time, its dense and austere texture in monuments such as the monastery of Makryalexi, in Epirus (1599),[59] refers to a rural, rather closed society, which realistically reflects the well-known costume habits in Epirus and Macedonia,[60] as depicted, for example, in the monasteries of Holy Gregoriou (1779) (**Figure 9.1**) and Koutloumousiou, in Mount Athos (1744),[61] where the dancers, instead of a headscarf, are crowned with exotic feathers, ribbons, and floral jewelry by metallic or fabric elements, according to the dominant trend in Europe, and the ancient custom for the celebration of Spring; analogues elements also adorn the bride at the wedding ceremony.[62] Simultaneously, in these last monuments, in the skirts and dresses of the dancers we may recognize modern embroidery and woven designs, while the salwar worn by the dancer in Koutloumousiou mirrors contemporary, ordinary clothing habits. A similar reflection of the aesthetic of the time exists in Mcxeta in Georgia, where young girls hold long scarves and wear dresses of a ballooned, crinoline type. Of course, this short dress serves the swirls of the dance, as also the type of scarf, which follows, in terms of shape and movement, the braids of the dancers in their rotations. This "professional" type of clothing is also recognized in the details of other costumes, for example in the church of Saint Dionysios at Palaeochora, on the island of Aegina (1609/10),[63] where the wide triangular sleeves of women's dresses emphasize the movement of the dance, a detail known from the Byzantine period.[64]

The jewelry worn by young women follows the same principles as clothing and emphasizes the power of a flourishing economic class that has contacts with Europe and especially with the Italian society. Prosperity, a concept expressed by the dancers' pleasure, is reflected in the gemstone necklaces of Klimatia, in the ornamented with golden bracelets, bare arms of the women of Arma, on the island of Euboea (1637), and in the rarely depicted, gold crowns of women in the monastery of Saint Panteleimon at Agia near Larisa (1724, **Figure 9.5**).[65]

Joy, physical and spiritual, is often restrained and inner, as it is expressed in the elegant noblewomen of Klimatia and Vatheia with their tall, attractive necks and the solemn expressive glance; sometimes, joy may be extroverted, with intense movements, body twists, elevations, a variety of tilts and head rise, glowing glances, plenty of emotion and purity, and hair hung loose by the excitement of the dance, as in Panagia in Kentro (ex Gaitses), or braided in respectable knots at the back and top of their head, as in the church of Prophet Ilias at Kallianeika.

Figure 9.5 The sacred dance of young women, crowned with a gold tiara. Wall-painting, Monastery of Saint Panteleimon, katholikon (main church), Agia near Larisa, 1724 (© Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Ephorate of Antiquities of Larisa).

Interestingly, this varied physical expression is accentuated by the elegance of clothing and jewelry, and sometimes is ingeniously intensified by the sound of objects, such as small bells or others,[66] knit into the hair of the dancer, for example in the chapel of Panagia Koukouzelissa in the Holy Monastery of Great Lavra in Mount Athos (1717),[67] where, used as apotropaic elements, they thunder and remove evil and darkness, superseding it with joy and purity.

In any case, however, neither the clothing, nor the jewelry, nor the movement reveal the body of the dancers, which with the exception of the bare arms, head, and neck of the women, is always covered from head to toe low, revealing, at the most, part of their shoes or bare feet. Painters focus only on the external features of women, while they treat the body, as usual, with modesty. The body is barely visible under the heavy and multi-layered elegant clothes of the dancers, and when a part of it becomes almost visible, then it appears plump under the folding of the dresses. An interesting exception is offered by several Ainoi compositions of the 18th century in messinian (Exo/Outer) Mani, such as at Kallianeika and Panagia at Kentro (ex Gaitses),[68] where the dancers are depicted with loose hair and without headscarves, with breasts almost visible, formed under their dresses with simple semicircles. This indication of the dancers' sexuality may be related to nowadays lost

works of secular painting, and also to ordinary ecclesiastical paintings, negatively charged, such as Salome's dance at the Decapitation of Saint John the Forerunner.[69]

Salome's dance is frequently mentioned negatively in the patristic sources as an *exemplum* of dangerous and illegal dance, which must be avoided by all faithful and dancers. The sexuality expressed by this certain dance and the crime with which is connected justify the condemnatory attitude that runs through the ecclesiastical art, in general, about the depiction of dance; one might say, this illegal dance summarizes the moralistic, conservative, and condemnatory position of the Church towards the female body and its nudity.

Church iconography is not interested in the sexual body; instead, the humble skin that surrounds a mass of bones in the iconography of the life of Saint Mary of Egypt,[70] the prostitute who repented and annihilated her human existence, offers a representative example of the acceptable, spiritual and im-bodily path of the ascetics and hermits.

This rejection of the female body fortunately enough didn't eliminate dance depictions, which continued to happen inside churches or in outdoor festivities, expressing emotions with the immediacy of the body language. However, it should be noted that dance retains its sacred character, depicting the verse of the Psalm without materiality, even when depicting independent dances of men and women, such as in the aforementioned church of the Annunciation of the Virgin in Aroania, Kalavryta (1703), or especially when depicting mixed dances of men and women, as in the katholikon of the monastery of Holy Gregoriou in Mount Athos (1779, **Figure 9.1**).

A necessary element that supports the spectacle of the dance, and worths comments in the present study, is the presence and participation of musicians, the vast majority of which are men. Musicians form groups of wind, string and percussion instruments, such as in the monastery of Saint John Forerunner at Mele in Artemisia, Messinia (1676),[71] or *zygia* (wind instruments and percussion, as zournas and drum) as it is usual in the monuments of the painters of Linotopi, or they even belong to a wider group with various instruments, as in many of the monuments of Mani, where they sit cross-legged (*okladon*) on a stage, playing the harp, double trumpet and strings with pen and bow. Their participation in the item is crucial, because they invest movement with sound, they guide the dance rhythm, and they support both the improvisation and the formal movement of the dancers. In fact, they often dance themselves, either alone or in connection with one of the dancers, such as in Nicosia.

Rarely, women musicians are also represented, offering an interesting and useful element for understanding women's participation in the life of community. The drum/tambourine played by a woman in the monastery of Koutloumousiou at Mount Athos and, the "daouli" sound by a young woman in the monastery of Seltsou near Arta indicate the unknown side of women's participation in the otherwise patriarchal society in the

Post-Byzantine times. Iconographical, they originate from issues with important female figures, such as Mariam and her epic dance after the Red Sea Crossing, or scenes from Antiquity, such as the birth of Zeus.[72] Their relationship with reality is unclear, but they certainly reflect the atmosphere of private gatherings and celebrations that have always taken place in a close family circle, or in a wider one.

The dance of Ainoi, however, despite its distinct relationship with historical reality, maintains its strong symbolic character. It aims at the solemn glorification of God and at this absolute need for union with the Divine, subjugates the beauty of clothing, sanctity or vivacity of movements, and certainly, space and time of its fulfillment. In the narthex, or in the *liti* for the monasteries, a place where Ainoi are usually depicted, is performed a part of the Sequence of the Matins (*Orthros*), which welcomes the day and light and praises God "as light". In the narthex also takes place the funeral procession, as well as Easter celebrations, highlighting items' resurrection content[73] and the perception of the purified participation of all beings in the glorification of God in Paradise.[74]

The high theological significance of Ainoi reflects the collective joy of the feasts of the Community as well as the joy of humankind and of all creatures one by one. This spirit is explained by a miniature of the Psalter Barberini (cod. gr. 372, folio 187 1092–1118, or circa 1095), where Christ draws from Hades the round dancing humankind;[75] it is also expressed by the "polykandilon" or "choros" of the Mount Athos and Serbian monasteries, to the ritual movement of which during the Easter Liturgy is symbolized the very joyful act of the universe participation in the Resurrection.[76] This is how older perceptions and habits continue, as, for example, the perception of the Roman feast of "Rusalia" (or Rosaria), or of the Jewish Easter[77] according to which the faithfuls dance in the churches[78] and in the tombs of the martyrs and their loved ones, in the days after Easter, or even inside or outside churches at Christmas and at Epiphany.[79] An almost modern example is the song "Glory to Him every day" (also called "doxastikon" or "ainos") which was recorded, nowadays, in settlements of modern Corfu island; this song was danced by priests inside churches, or in the courtyard, after the Vesper, as well as at the "opening" of the dances on Easter days.[80] Finally, similar is the oral testimony of refugees from Black Sea recorded by Konstantinos Kalokyris, that after the Divine Liturgy of Easter the dance was starting from the narthex of the church, to end up in the courtyard and from there in the community.[81]

In conclusion, the dance of Ainoi depicts literally the psalm verses of the Hymn. It is a realistic spectacle where the movements, costumes, jewelry and, generally, iconography of the dancers reflect perceptions and habits of their contemporaneous age. Dances' theological association with the Resurrection culminates in the joy of life, expressed in terms of materiality, i.e., with the purified ecstasy or the sacred movement of the dancers. The body itself is only elliptically depicted. Nevertheless, the female composition of

the dance submits the constant, primordial ability of nature for rebirth and evolutionary continuity in time.

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Notes

1 The author has conducted fieldwork in most of the Post-Byzantine monuments with "Ainoi" depictions. This is indicated in the text, in cases of either unpublished monuments or insufficient bibliographic information.

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64 K. Keiko, Notes on the Dancers in the Mocking of Christ at Staro Nagoričino, *Deltion of the Christian Archaeological Society* 27(2006), 159–168, where previous bibliography and examples.

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the holy women with the *Nymphios* of the Church. General information about the depiction of "Ainoi" see in J. T. A. Koumoulidis - C. Walter, *Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Monuments at Aghia in Thessaly, Greece. The Art and Architecture of the Monastery of Saint Panteleimon*, Zeno Booksellers & Publishers: London 1975, 7, 15, page 27 figures 6, 6α, 70 design 10, 76 design 23. V. Touli, Ο τοιχογραφικός διάκοσμος της μονής του Αγ. Παντελεήμονος της Αγιάς και η μελέτη συντήρησής του, *Thessaliko Imerologio* 60(2011), 233, figure page 237.

66 F. Anoyanakis, *Greek Folk Musical Instruments*, Melissa Publishing House: Athens 1991², 92–93, 48, figure 16.

67 Anoyanakis, *Greek Folk Musical Instruments,* 126, 124–125 figure 39.

68 Compare, also, the example of Ainoi in the church of Saint Georgios at Myrsini, Mani (1746), a photograph of which is included in the study of Sofia Menekakou, in this volume. For the monument and the depiction of Ainoi see mainly N. V. Drandakis and others, 'Ε*ρευνα στην Κάτω Μάνη,* Athens 1993, 61–69, pl. 15–17. Schiemenz, The faithful, 154, 159, 166, 168, 170. Schiemenz, Laud Psalms Paintings, 195, 199, 201, 202, 203.

69 See A. Xyngopoulos, Salomi (?), *Epetiris Etaireias Vyzantinon Spoudon* 12 (1936), 269–277. Webb, Salome's Sisters, 119–148.

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71 K. Kalokyris, *Βυζαντιναί εκκλησίαι της Ιεράς Μητροπόλεως Μεσσηνίας*, unknown publishing house: Thessaloniki 1973, 218, 220, plates 200α, 202–205α. Ch. Pennas, *Byzantine Aegina*, 54. Schiemenz, King David's Chant, 204, 208 subnote 67, 209, 214, 216, 217, 222, 230 figure 11.

72 In both cases are depicted women musicians, either single or in group. See examples in Currie, Απεικονίσεις, 134–135.

73 Parcharidou, *Ainoi*, mainly pages 24–25, 27. N. Isar, The Dance of Adam: Reconstracting the Byzantine χορός, *Byzantinoslavica* 61(2003), 179–204.

74 For the meaning of the depiction of Ainoi in the narthex see Parcharidou, *Ainoi*, 211–220, where previous bibliography.

75 *The Barberini Psalter Codex Vaticanus Barberianus Graecus 372, Introduction and Commentary J. Anderson, P. Canart, Ch. Walter*, Belser, Zürich - New York 1989, 128–129. Isar, The Dance of Adam, 195 figure 9. Researchers connect the illustration with the hymn of the Easter Sunday; see Kalokyris, *Ορθοδοξία*, 30–31. Isar, The Dance of Adam, 191–195.

76 Isar, The Dance of Adam, 201–202, where previous bibliography.

77 Isar, The Dance of Adam, 194, where bibliography.

78 As in Pringiponisia and in Aegina, at Easter, in the 19th century. See Koukoules, Ο χορός, 216–217, where previous bibliography.

79 Koukoules, Ο χορός, 216–217. Kalokyris, *Ορθοδοξία*, 23–24.

80 M. Terzopoulou - Z. Margari, Δόξα να 'χει πάσα ημέρα (Doxa nahei pasa imera), *Folk Seasonal Songs. Easter Songs. Springtime Songs of Death and Resurrection. Collection-Selection-Musical Supervision Domna Samiou*, Domna Samiou Greek Folk Music Association: Athens 1998, 56–58.

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Part IV

An ethnographic glimpse

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10 Illustrating the everyday life of women in Mani during the Post-Byzantine period. A small contribution to the subject[1]

Sofia Menenakou

Scholarship in recent decades has turned to the study of the position and the multiple roles of so-called "everyday humble working" women in Byzantine culture.[2] However, still lacking is a thorough overview of this subject-matter in Post-Byzantine societies, with emphasis on the Gender roles in local communities. An interesting case-study that provides an excellent opportunity to highlight sporadically some aspects of those – usually considered – "marginal" female figures is the region of Mani, a peninsula at the southern Peloponnese (eastern Messinia and western Laconia), in Greece, during the 18th and 19th centuries. The large area of Mani is selected on purpose, due to its historical and geographical particularities that led to distinctive social ethics: the diverse relief of the Mani terrain that led accordingly to its division into various administrative and cultural units (**Figure 10.1**); the social organization of the Maniots in interrelated groups – the *gene* (lineages); and the multinuclear family also found in other parts of Greece.[3] Also, the constant wars of Maniots against Ottomans and the fact that they were not ultimately subdued to them,[4] as well as the extended practice of piracy due to the poverty of the land[5] played additionally an important role to the formation of local communities.

Maniot artistic, cultural and ethnographical records also provide a wealth of sources that can illustrate the everyday life, personality and appearance of indigenous women. A fragment of the vast number of church murals and architectural characteristics, dedicatory inscriptions, prayers/invocations/supplications, and travellers' accounts dating mainly from the 18th and 19th centuries is selected and evaluated as key-evidence. What we wish to highlight is how Maniot women are represented and acted as protagonists in common domestic activities, religious scenes, and patronage and sponsorship, taking occasionally into account the Byzantine past or tracing the ethnographical impact. More specifically, as characteristic show-cases introducing the topic are four religious scenes (the Nativity of the Virgin, the Ainoi (Laudes), the Last Judgment according to the words of Matthew 25: 35–36: "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat…" and the Punishments of the Damned), the architectural element of the "matroneum," how Maniot females defined themselves in all kinds of church inscription,

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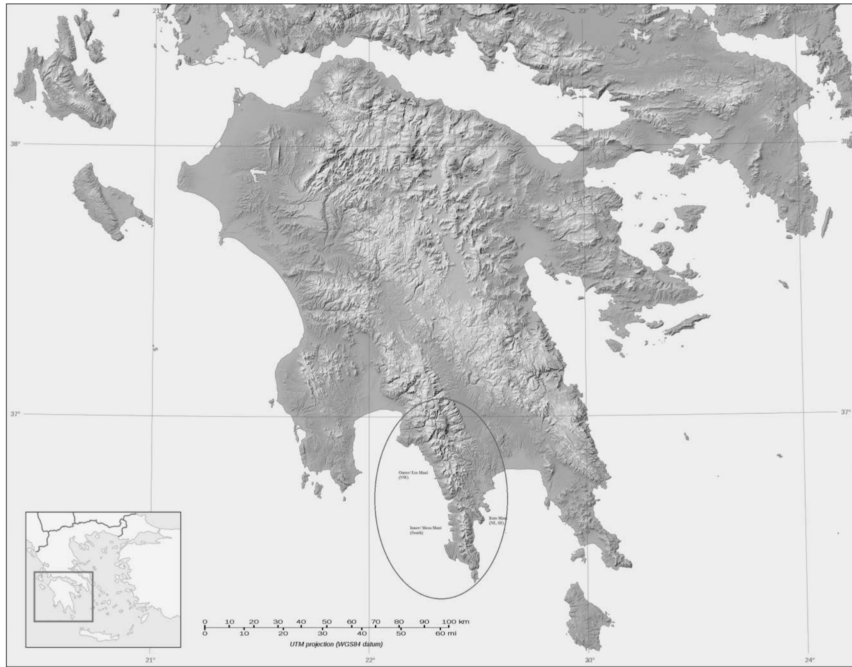

Figure 10.1 Map of Peloponnese, southern Greece, indicating in red circle the Mani peninsula and Its geographical units (©Eric Gaba https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Peloponnese_relief_map-blank.svg).

what foreigners and locals recorded regarding their participation in fights, their care for the dead, their relationship with men.

Starting from the repertoire of church murals, which – as stated above – is quite impressive in terms of quantity during the periods studied in present paper, the scene of the Nativity of the Virgin in several Maniot churches consists an interesting and at the same time a rare example of including a "genuine" laic female image; at the church of Dormition of Virgin, in Drosopigi (ex Tserova), a village in laconian (Lower) Eastern Mani, a small-scale maid in front of Anna's bed is shown spinning, while at the same time she is rocking the Virgin's cradle with her foot (**Figure 10.2**).[6] This detail is lacking from the Byzantine versions of the scene and that what makes this particular depiction of particular interest. The task of spinning,[7] which precedes weaving,[8] is known as predominately female since Antiquity[9] and it remained a beloved occupation also for women in Byzantium.[10] Female weavers had their own feast, the feast day of Saint Agathi,[11] their patron saint, possibly also their own guild.

Spinning was very popular and widely practiced by women in Mani up to the third quarter of the 20th century in parallel with tailoring.[12] However,

Figure 10.2 Nativity of Virgin, detail of a weaving maid. Wall painting, church of Dormition of Virgin, Drosopigi (ex Tserova), laconian (Lower) Eastern Mani, 1768 (© Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Ephorate of Antiquities of Laconia).

as a paradox, weaving, tailoring and embroidery were also practiced by men in the villages in the messinian (Exo/ Outer) Mani – quite unexpected for such a "rugged" in terms of physical and gendered environment.[13] However, these activities were at last so overwhelmingly associated with women that, until about the third quarter of the 20th century, a sewing machine was an indispensable part of the household of a woman who was about to be married. Several young women would go to seamstresses in order to master the art of tailoring not only as a profession but also in order to be able to make or repair clothes for the family (**Figure 10.3**).

From the iconographical cycle of the Ainoi (Laudes, see also the chapter of Madgalini Parcharidou here) of special interest is the scene of the dance.[14] Dancing was particularly loved and practiced by the Byzantines, despite the prohibitions by the Church.[15] Research has already shed light on the types of the dances that were performed at that time, the clothes and the overall style of the dancers. Same seems to be the case for Mani, as seen in local church iconography, for example at the church of Saint George, at village Myrsini (ex Panitsa) in laconian (Lower) Eastern Mani (**Figure 10.4**).

Figure 10.3 Seamstresses with their teacher. Photograph at the village of Saint Nicholaos in Melitini, laconian (Lower/Eastern) Mani, mid-20th century (© author, Sofia Menenakou).

Figure 10.4 Ainoi (Laudes), detail of the dance scene. Wall-painting, church of Saint George in Myrsini (ex Panitsa), laconian (Lower/Eastern) Mani, 1746 (© Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Ephorate of Antiquities of Laconia).

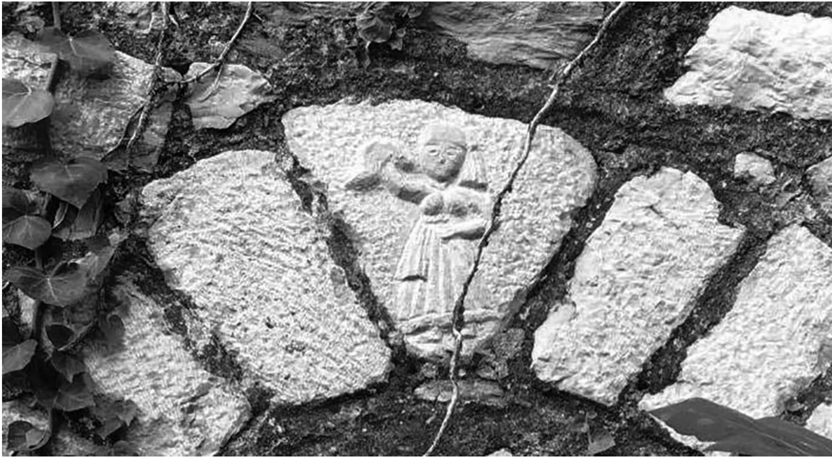

Figure 10.5 A woman dancing. Low-stone relief, Ventiri΄s family house, Kentro (ex Gaitses), messinian (Exo/Outer) Mani, second half of 19th century (© Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Ephorate of Antiquities of Messinia).

The dancing women wear a long robe: thin, outlining the breast, and folded around the waist by younger women.[16] In contrast, the garments of women in the same image in the church of Saint Nicholas at Germa (consisting of two pieces, a long skirt and a shirt) are identical to an everyday local traditional dress. However, similar is the dress can be seen worn by a female dancer from the crown of Constantine IX Monomachos in the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest.[17] The fondness of women in Mani for dancing[18] is also evident even in reliefs adorning façades of houses **(Figure 10.5)** or of churches.[19]

The next scenes, the Last Judgment according to Matthew, chap. 25: 35–36[20] and the Punishments of the Damned[21] are encountered equally frequently in the Mani. The words of Christ

> For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me,

replace the Last Judgment that had been standardized in Byzantine times;[22] The passage is read in church on the third Sunday of the pre-Lent period, after the Sunday of the Tax Collector and the Pharisee and of the Prodigal Son and the parable teach and advise the faithful what to do in order to earn a place in Heaven.

Figure 10.6 Detail of the Last Judgment scene, according to the words of Matthew "I was hungry and you gave me something to eat" (Matthew 25, 35–36). Wall-painting, church of Dormition of the Virgin in Drosopigi (ex Tserova), laconian (Lower/Eastern) Mani, 1768 (© Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Ephorate of Antiquities of Laconia).

In most occurrences of the scene the figure that offers alms is a woman, either alone or accompanied by a man (**Figure 10.6**). At the church of Dormition of Virgin, in Drosopigi (ex Tserova), in laconian laconian (Lower/Eastern) Mani, the image of a rather indigent woman is depicted, with covered body and head. The sole figure of a woman in this and the next accompanying scene scene "I was in prison and you came to visit me," is quite uncommon, as typically there is a man depicted offering money to a prisoner.[23]

The Punishments of the Damned, although restricted in number, is a representative example of a religious scene echoing gendered biases not only in Mani but overall in Christian eschatological iconography. Among the punishments of women, the following scenes became common:[24] women sleeping on Sunday instead of attending church, women chattering during church service, prostitutes, witches, snitches, nuns violating their monastic duties, and the wife of the priest who does not honor her husband. What is commonly argued is that the depiction of this theme was a way to exert social control over women;[25] that may be most probably the case especially in Mani (**Figure 10.7**). However, of striking importance is the observation

Figure 10.7 Detail of the Last Judgment scene, the punishment of the prostitute. Wall-painting, church of Saint Nicholas in Germa, Lower/ Eastern laconian Mani, 1752 (© Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Ephorate of Antiquities of Laconia).

that that the punishment of the female prostitute is depicted as many times as the punishment of the male prostitute, even though the society of Mani was indisputably male-dominated.[26]

The prayers/invocations/supplications and dedicatory inscriptions written on the walls of the churches contain evidence about the position of women in Post-Byzantine Mani.[27] In the dedicatory inscriptions, where the sponsors of mural paintings are more than one family, the names of the *genos* (lineage) are mentioned, for example Larianoi-Kotzianoi in the church of the Dormition of the Virgin at Drosopigi (ex Tserova).[28] In most dedicatory inscriptions or prayers/invocations, the patron is a man and next to his name are mentioned his wife and children, without their names.[29] This has also been observed in the Byzantine period for the Mani and in general.[30] Only in messinian (Exo/ Outer) Mani, in prayers/invocations and in one dedicatory inscription, is the first name of women inscribed next to the name of the male patron as his equal.[31] In the laconian Mani, the first name of the woman is mentioned only in one case: that of Eleni, the mother of the patron, who was a monk.[32]

However, there are prayers/invocations in individual images whose donors were women, either nuns[33] or alone, with their children. The latter are not mentioned by their first name, but by the first name or family name of their husbands. For example, we read supplication of the wife of Thomas, son of Antonakos[34] or of the wife of Pieros Pontikakos,[35] of the wife of Giannis Arfanis[36] and of Panagiota, wife of Dimitris Gardasis, the sole case

where the name of the wife is mentioned.[37] In Mani, women were known until the third quarter of the 20th century by the name of their husbands,[38] as has been observed in other parts of Greece as well.[39] Research has yielded five supplications, three for the donation of only one depiction, one for the donation of an icon, and one for the donation of a bema door for a wood-carved altar screen (templon), whereby the patrons are exclusively women.[40] It is possible that they were merely widows,[41] who, like in Byzantine times,[42] were the heads of their households, and whose donation was of a small scale.

On account of local church architecture, what can be showcased is how the segregation between women and men was foreseen, accordingly which part was purposed for the female attendants. In the small single-aisle churches in laconian (Lower/Eastern) Mani (specifically the area between Gytheion and Areopolis), the west part is elevated and is reserved for the matroneum (women's section inside the church). Therefore, women stood behind men in church. This segregation also prevailed in other social events in the Mani area.[43] Yet, until today, norm is that men attend mass in the right part of the church and women in the left, although this is not strictly followed.

The information from texts authored by travellers[44] portray the women of Mani as dynamic figures, equally participating to various tasks outside their domestic space.[45] Apart from their handicraft skills, they participated in all agricultural activities, because men were constantly engaged in warfare, either to maintain the independence of Mani or to take part in vendetta feuds. On many occasions women followed their husbands at war,[46] tending to their wounds or even taking part in the fighting. According to tradition, Maniot women during the Greek Revolution (1821) showed heroic behavior on occasions such as the repulsion of the troops of Ibrahim Pasha in the 23th June of 1826 at Diros village, with sickles as their sole weapons until the arrival of their husbands.[47] Important in this respect is the information that the widow of a chieftain assumed the headship of the *kapetania* (an administrative unit) and led the men even during pirate raids.[48]

Another important source of information for the life of women in Mani are the laments (*moirologia*),[49] with which, according to scholars, they exerted control over the lives of men.[50] Besides, the care for the dead was the duty of women since Byzantine times.[51] Of special interest is the work of the contemporary poet (18th century) Nikitas Nifakis, who criticized his fellow countrymen for their behavior towards women and for their ferocity.[52] Therefore, there were voices defending women at the time. Maniots in north and east Mani often expressed negative comments about the bad behavior of Maniots in south Mani toward their wives.[53] Somehow, it was believed that even the diverse relief of the terrain in these areas was effecting social – probably also gendered – behavior patterns; south Mani is barren, whereas the land of north and east Mani is more fertile and that may account for the economic and social differences among its inhabitants. [54]

Despite the above, rudimentary and scattered material of female portrayal in Mani of 18th and 19th centuries, we may allude to few points regarding

the women's position and everyday life. Focusing primarily on domestic activities, it seems that upbringing of children, spinning-weaving, and tailoring were among the common and beloved ones, tracking their routes back to at least Byzantine times. Women and men were separated in all aspects of co-existing but at the same time they were co-operating; war is an excellent example of this co-acting. This fact reveals that when circumstances called for it, they rejected their passivity and they assumed leadership or engaged in fighting as the equal counterparts of men. Social control was exerted over their lives and this control was reinforced by the social organization in gene. However, especially in Mani, not even men seemed to escape from the power of traditional ethical rules. Dedicatory inscriptions or prayers/invocations/supplications reveal that women could be patrons on their own only when they were nuns or the heads of their households, possibly in the case they were widows. Donations were of a small scale, limited to a mural painting or an icon. In most cases they acted as patrons with their husbands and children and their names are not mentioned. However, when their names are included, they are mentioned in reference to their husbands in south Mani and with their first names in messinian Mani, according to the published material.

The above evidence may not be out of the ordinary, at least some of the cases presented, since they characterize women even from the Byzantine past, in Mani, as well as in other areas of Greece almost until the third quarter of the 20th century. More of artistic and ethnographical interrelated research will certainly add to the topic. For the time being, the small fragment here echoes how Maniot women existed before the overwhelming evolution of technology and tourism that brought economic and social changes to the life of the population.

Notes

1 I owe special thanks to various friends and colleagues who supported me and facilitated my contribution to the topic: my director Spyridoula Mourgopoulou and archaeologist Vicky Skaraki, ethnologist Eleutherios Alexakis, archaeologists Evangelia Pantou (Director, Ephorate of Antiquities of Laconia) and Evangelia Militsi-Kehagia (Ephorate of Antiquities of Messinia), the people at the Center of Culture of Eastern Mani for willingly granting permissions for photographic material, Byzantinist Nikos Melvani who translated the present article in English.

2 Selectively P. Koukoules, *Vie et civilisation Byzantines*, vol. 2/II, Institut français d' Athènes: Athens 1948, 163 onwards, who has first written on Byzantine women (in Greek). A. E. Laiou, The Role of Women in Byzantine Society, *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 31/1(1981), 233–260, inspired several scholars. Also, recently K. Nikolaou, *The Woman in the Middle Byzantine Period. Social Models and Everyday Life in the Hagiographical Texts*, Monographs 6, National Hellenic Research Foundation-Institute of Historical Research: Athens 2016.

3 E. P. Alexakis, *Family*, *Kinship and Marriage in Contemporary* Greece: *An Ethno-sociological Approach,* Herodotos: Athens 2014, 57–96 (Thrace), 119–155 (Boeotia), 189–218 (Livadeia), 157–187 (Nafpaktos), 219–259 (Epirus) (in Greek,

summaries in English). T. Kioussopoulou, *Ο θεσμός της οικογένειας στην Ήπειρο κατά τον 13ο αιώνα*, Forschungen zur byzantinischen Rechtsgeschichte-Athener Reihe 4, Sakkoulas: Athens 1990. Nikolaou, *The Woman in the Middle Byzantine Period*, 163.

4 For the history of Mani during especially that period, see in general with previous bibliography G. Saitas, Mani, D. Filippidis (ed.), *Greek Traditional Architecture*, Melissa: Athens 1990. K. Komis, *Πληθυσμός και Οικισμοί της Μάνης, 15ος – 19ος αιώνας,* Dodoni 57, University of Ioannina Press: Ioannina 1995. D. Mexis, *Η Μάνη και οι Μανιάτες*, Estia: Athens 1997.

5 J. M. Wagstaff, The Economy of Mani Peninsula (Greece) in the Eighteenth Century, *Balkan Studies* 6/2(1965), 83–173. Komis, *Πληθυσμός και Οικισμοί,* 28–29.

6 The source of the image is the apocryphal Protoevangelium (Gospel) of James. C. Tischendorf, *Evangelia Apocryfa*, vol. 5, Avenarius et Mendelsohn: Leipzig 1853, 10–12. G. Babić, Sur l' iconographie de la composition "Nativité de la Vierge" dans la peinture byzantine, *Zbornik Radova* 7(1961), 169–175. J. Lafontaine Dosogne, *Iconographie de l' Enfance de la Vierge dans l' Empire Byzantine et en Occident,* Palais des Académies: Bruxelles 1992, 89–122.

7 S. Skopeteas, Η Μανιάτισσα τον 18ο αιώνα, όπως την είδαν οι περιηγητές, *Filologiki Protochronia* 4(1947), 243–247 describes the Maniot woman spinning and at the same time rocking the crandle of the baby, just like in the image. For images depicting scenes of spinning G. A. Mantas, Presentations of the household chores of women in Byzantine art: a first approach, M. Panayotidi-Kesisoglou (ed.), *Women in Byzantium. Worship and Art. Special subject of the 26th Symposium of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Archaeology and Art*, Piraeus Group Cultural Foundation: Athens 2012, 55 (in Greek). E. Makri – E. Angelkou – M. Cheimonopoulou, Women's Activities, Adornment and Costume in Early Christian World, Panayotidi-Kesissoglou, *Women in Byzantium,* 72.

8 For the profession of weavers in the Byzantine period, see E. Margarou, *Titles and professional names of women in Byzantium: a contribution to the study of the status of women in Byzantine society*, PhD thesis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki: Thessaloniki 2000, 259–262. A. E. Laiou, Women in the Marketplace of Constantinople (10th–14th Centuries), N. Nečipoglou (ed.), *Byzantine Constantinople*, Ashgate: Leiden – Boston – Köln 2001, 261–273.

9 E. I. W. Barber, *Prehistoric Textiles. The Development of Cloth in the Neolithic and Bronze Ages*, Princeton University Press: Princeton 1991. I. Tzachili, *Υφαντική και Υφάντρες στο Προϊστορικό Αιγαίο, 2000–1000 π.Χ.*, Crete University Press: Herakleion 1997. I. Tzachili, Weaving on Mount Olympos: Athena Weaves, Artemis Spins, Zeus Misapropriates and Dionysos Destroys, *Archaeology and Arts* 68(1998), 20–23.

10 C. J. Taylor, *Late Antique Images of the Virgin Annunciate Spinning. Allotting the Scarlet and the Purple*, Texts and Studies in Eastern Christianity 11, Brill: Leiden 2018, 128, 210–212.

11 Margarou, *Titles and Professional Names,* 69. Laiou, *The Place of Women*, 25. Laiou, *Women in the Market Place*, 261–273.

12 Margarou, *Titles and Professional Names,* 302. The word "*raptaina*" (seamstress) is mentioned as a professional name.

13 Alexakis, *Τα γένη*, 216–217.

14 For the dance in the Ainoi (Laudes), see M. Parcharidou, *The representation of Ainoi in the monumental painting of the 16th century: a contribution to the study of the subject with references to monuments of 15th – 19th centuries,* PhD thesis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki: Thessaloniki 2000. A. Moutzali, Dance as a Social Art in the Everyday life of the Byzantines, *Archaeology and Arts*

91(2004), 10–21. M. Voutsa, The Female Dance in Byzantine and Postbyzantine Iconography. A First Approach, *Archaeology and Arts* 91(2004), 43–44. M. Parcharidou-Anagnostou, Dance in the Post-Byzantine Monumental Religious Painting (15th–19th Centuries), *Archaeology and Arts* 91(2004), 50–58.

15 Moutzali, Dance as a social Art, 20–21. John Chrysostom condemned dancing, however the Byzantines danced in spite of the prohibitions; particularly interesting is that they did so during the great feasts of Easter and the Resurrection in the courtyards of churches. Parcharidou-Anagnostou, Dance in the Post-Byzantine painting, 41, subnote 4, 55, subnote 31.

16 Doubtful whether or not it corresponds with reality. See M. Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images: Byzantine Material, Culture and Religious Iconography (11th–15th Centuries*), Medieval Mediterranean 41, Brill: Leiden – Boston 2003, 282. The author reports examples which do not agree with what one expects.

17 Moutzali, Dance as a Social Art, figure 6.

18 Skopeteas, Η Μανιάτισσα τον 18ο αιώνα, 237.

19 K. D. Kassis, *Η λαϊκή γλυπτική της Μάνης*, private edition: Athens 1983, 98.

20 For this subject, see S. Menenakou, Η εικονιστική απόδοση των λόγων του Ιησού (Ματθ. 25, 35–36) σε μεταβυζαντινούς ναούς της Μάνης, *Θησαύρισμα. Αριστείον Πνευματικόν εις τον Δικαίον Β. Βαγιακάκον δια τα πενήντα χρόνια επιστημονικής του προσφοράς, Laconian Studies* 11(1992), 230–239. E. Pantou, Οι ατομικοί κολασμοί των αμαρτωλών σε μεταβυζαντινούς ναούς της Μάνης, E. P. Eleftheriou – A. Mexia (eds), *Conference on the Byzantine Mani in Memory of Nikolaos Drandakis, Proceedings,* Hellenic Ministry of Culture – Municipality of Itilo: Sparti 2008–2009, 250–251.

21 For this topic in Post-Byzantine Mani with an extensive analysis and previous bibliography, see Pantou, Οι ατομικοί κολασμοί, 233–258, especially 234–250. A. Dekazou, *Οι ατομικές τιμωρίες των επαγγελματιών στην παράσταση της Δευτέρας Παρουσίας στη Βυζαντινή και Μεταβυζαντινή Μνημειακή Ζωγραφική*, MA thesis University of Ioannnina: Ioannina 1998. D. Triantaphyllopoulos, Σωτηρία και Τιμωρία: Η εικαστική πλευρά της Δευτέρας Παρουσίας, *Synaxis* 121(2012), 25–42. I. Chouliaras, The Post-Byzantine Iconography of the Individual Punishment of the Sinners in the Depiction of Hell in Northwestern Greece: Differences and Similarities to the Cretan School Painting, *Zograf* 40(2016), 141–158. More specifically, on page 141, subnote 2 several studies concerning punishments of sinners, male and female, are mentioned.

22 M. K. Garidis, *Études sur le Jugement Dernier post-byzantin du XVe à la fin du XIXe siècle. Iconographie-Esthétique,* Society for Macedonian Studies: Thessaloniki 1985.

23 Menenakou, Η εικονιστική απόδοση, 234.

24 Pantou, Οι ατομικοί κολασμοί, 233, 257, 258, subnotes 164, 165 and 241 (women sleeping on Sunday and of the prostitute), 246 (women chattering in the church, the witch and the snitch), 257, subnotes 163–164 (nuns and wives of the priests not honoring their husband).

25 E. Drakopoulou, Ο φόβος της τιμωρίας στη βυζαντινή και τη μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική, E. Grammatikopoulou (ed.), *Οι Συλλογικοί Φόβοι στην Ιστορία,* National Hellenic Research Foundation: Athens 2000, 93–116, especially, 99, 101.

26 Pantou, Οι ατομικοί κολασμοί, 245.

27 For the Post-Byzantine painters and patrons, see the chapter Patrons and Craftsmen in Mani during the Byzantine and Post-Byzantine period*,* P. Kalamara – N. Roumeliotis – A. Mexia (eds), *Tales of Religious Faith in Mani*, Hellenic Ministry of Culture-Directorate of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Antiquities: Athens 2005*,* 106–107 (S. Kalopissi-Verti), 42 (E. Deliyanni – Doris), 85–98 (M. Panagiotidi). S. Menenakou, Epigrafic Testimonies about Painters and Donators of

churches in Mani (17th – 19th centuries), *Peloponnesos (Morea) under Turkish and Venetian Domination (1460–1821)*, *Third International Congress of Oriental and African Studies*, Gastouni, September 5–7, 2008 (in press).

28 The inscription has been edited by the memorable N.V. Drandakis, Χριστιανικαί επιγραφαί Λακωνικής, *Archaiologike Ephemeris* 106(1967), 151, nr. 3 (also in C. Konstantinidi (ed.), *Μάνη και Λακωνία. Λακωνία, Ανασκαφή και Έρευνα*, vol. 4, *Annuaire de l' Association des Études* Laconiennes: Athènes 2009, 71. N. Drandakis and others, *Έρευνα στην Κάτω Μάνη*, *Vivliotheke tes en Athenais Archaiologikes Hetaireias* 130: Athens 1993, 168 (V. Kepetzi). S. Menenakou, *L' atelier du peintre Panayotis Klirodhetis dans le Magne du XIIIe siècle,* PhD thesis University of Ioannina: Ioannina 1998, 29–30, 37 for the ending -iani denoting genos (lineage) (in Greek, summary in French).

29 In the following churches: Saint George at Myrsini (ex Panitsa), Drandakis and others, *Κάτω Μάνη,* 67, Saint Peter Karvela, 87, Saint Dimitrios at Avorna, 100, Saint Stylianos at Kalyvia, 206 and Saint Nicholas at Paganea, 213 (M. Konstantoudaki), Saint Nicholas at Vachos, 161, Saint Barbara at Skoutari, 181, the Dormition of the Virgin at Skoutari, 183 (Kepetzi). Also, in messinian Mani in the church of the Dormition of the Virgin at Chora (ex Gaitses), N. V. Drandakis, Έρευναι εις την Μεσσηνιακήν Μάνην, *Praktika tēs en Athēnais Archaiologikēs Etaireias* 1976/A, 235 and in C. Konstantinidi (ed.), *Μάνη και Λακωνία*, *Μάνη-Ανασκαφή και Έρευνα,* vol. 2, *Society* of Laconian Studies: Athens 2009, 181. In the above-mentioned churches the woman is cited as wife or spouse. In the church of the Zoodochos Pigi (Life-Giving Spring) at Karvela, a prayer also mentions the name of the patron's mother, Eleni. The patron is a monk. Drandakis and others, *Κάτω Μάνη,* 94 (Konstantoudaki). In the church of Saint Kyriaki at Vachos, because the donor is a priest, his wife is mentioned as a "presbytera" (priest's wife). Drandakis and others, *Κάτω Μάνη,* 162 (Kepetzi).

30 S. Kalopissi-Verti, Female patronage in the Late Byzantine period, 253, 256 and M. Panayotidi-Kesisoglou, Comments and observation on the phenomenon of the involvement of women in donation, M. Panayotidi-Kesisoglou, *Women in Byzantium*, 257–258 (in Greek).

31 In the following churches: Saint Nicholas at Exochori, Drandakis and others, Έρευναι, 225 and Konstantidi, *Μάνη και Λακωνία,* vol. 2, 171, Prophet Ilias at Kallianeika, Drandakis and others, Έρευνα στη Μάνη, *Praktika tēs en Athēnais Archeogikēs Etaireias* 1981/B, 528 and Konstantinidi, *Μάνη και Λακωνία*, vol. 2, 640 (E. Deliyanni-Doris) and the Dormition of the Virgin at Rigglia, Drandakis and others, Έρευνα στη Μάνη, 560 (V. Kepetzi) and Konstantinidi, Μάνη και Λακωνία, vol. 2, 672.

32 In the church of the Zoodochos Pigi (Life-Giving Spring) at Karvelas, Drandakis and others, *Κάτω Μάνη*, 94(Konstantoudaki).

33 In the church of Saint Spyridon at Skoutari we read in an inscription "nun… nikis / nun…maria", Drandakis and others, *Κάτω Μάνη*, 200 (Kepetzi). The word "nun" ([μ]οναχής) can also to be read in the church of the Zoodochos Pigi at Kalyvia, Drandakis and others, *Κάτω Μάνη*, 208 (Konstantoudaki).

34 In the church of Taxiarchis at Karvela, Drandakis and others, *Κάτω Μάνη,* 84, (Konstantoudaki).

35 In the church of Saint George at Myrsini, Drandaki and others, *Κάτω Μάνη,* 66 (Konstantoudaki).

36 In the church of the Transfiguration at Karvela, Drandakis and others, *Κάτω Μάνη,* 93, (Konstantoudaki).

37 In the church of Saint John the Forerunner at Skoutari, in the image of Saint Dimitrios, after whom the donor's husband was named, Drandakis and others, *Κάτω Μάνη*, 198 (Kepetzi).

38 Alexakis, *Τα γένη,* 222.

39 E. Alexakis, Η δομή της ελληνικής οικογένειας στη Θράκη, *Mnemon* 5(1975), 93.

40 In the church of the Virgin Phaneromeni at Kouskouni in the two images of Saint Catherine and Saint Marina the names of female donors are still discernible. The author does not mention if there is any other information on them. Thus, we included them in the category of female donors without their husbands. Drandakis and others, Έρευνα, 229 (Konstantoudaki). In an icon of 1885 from the church of Saint John the Forerunner in Ageranos, there is a dedication by Z. Tsiggourakou and her children. Drandakis and others, *Κάτω Μάνη,* 132 (E. Deliyanni-Dori). In the church of Saint John the Forerunner in Areopoli (1746), the supplication of Zacharo Kapetanitsa has been detected. Drandakis, Χριστιανικαί επιγραφαί, 167 and Konstantinidi, Μάνη και Λακωνία, vol. 4, 91. The ending of the name at –itsa shows that the donor was the daughter of Kapetanakis. Also, in the (Exo/Outer) Mani, on the bema door of the altar screen (templon) of Saint Peter at Kastania, a female donor, Stathoula Plakoudia, is mentioned, without the name of her husband. This is the only female donor of a wood-carved item known so far in Mani, P. Kalamara and others (eds), *With Faith and Fantasy. Ecclesiastical Woodcarvings of Western Taygetos*, Hellenic Ministry of Culture-Directorate of Museums, Exhibitions and Educational Programs: Athens 2004, 41, 48 (S. Germanidou).

41 S. E. J. Gerstel – S. Kalopissi-Verti, Female church Founders: The agency of the village widow in Late Byzantium, L. Theis and others (eds)*, Female Founders in Byzantium and Beyond*, Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte 60, Böhlau Verlag: Wien 2014, 195–211.

42 For the Early Byzantine period, Panayotidi-Kesisoglou, Comments, 267 and C. Angelidi, Women patrons in Early Byzantium, M. Panayotidi-Kesisoglou, *Women in Byzantium,* 230. An important criterion for a donation is the economic emancipation of women. In the Middle Byzantine period the public role of women is undermined. After the 11th century members of female aristocracy appeared as patrons, because they were married to men from lower social classes. T. Papamastorakis, Female patronage from the 8th to the 12th century, Panayotidi-Kesisoglou, *Women in Byzantium*, 240. For the Late Byzantine period, Kalopissi-Verti, Female patronage, 255–256.

43 The space of the church was the meeting place of the members of the community. E. P. Alexakis, *Τα γένη και η παραδοσιακή κοινωνία της Μάνης*, PhD thesis, University of Ioannina: Ioannina 1980, 148–160. P. Kalamara – N. Roumeliotis (eds), *Settlements of Mani*, Hellenic Ministry of Culture-Directorate of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Antiquities: Athens 2004, 174–182, 179–182 (V. Albani). Kalamara – Roumeliotis – Mexia, *Tales of Religious Faith*, 111 (P. Kalamara).

44 For women in Mani, see selectively, R. Walpole (ed.), *Travels in Various Countries of the East, Being a Contribution of Memories Relating to European and Asiatic Turkey*, Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown: London 1820, 41, 50, 52 (J.B.S. Moritt). Skopeteas, Η Μανιάτισσα τον 18ο αιώνα, 243–247. T. Vournas – A. Spiliou, *Δήμου και Νικολό Στεφανόπολι. Ταξίδια στην Ελλάδα κατά τα χρόνια 1797 και 1798: (Μάνη-Ήπειρος). Δύο αποστολές από τις οποίες η μία με εντολή της γαλλικής κυβερνήσεως και η άλλη του αρχιστράτηγου Βοναπάρτη,* Topalidis: Athens 1974.

45 Alexakis, *Τα γένη*, 213–217. Pantou, Οι ατομικοί κολασμοί, 246 nr. 101, 100, 247 nr. 103.

46 S. Kapetanaki, Information on Mani and the Maniots by Claude Ruithière, *Laconian Studies* 14(1998), 199, 200.

47 D. V. Vagiacacos, *Ο Ιμβραήμ εναντίον της Μάνης. Μανιάτικα Α΄*, P. Patsilinakos: Athens 1961, 39–48.

48 E. Stratigea-Kefallineau, Maina in Hobhouse Itinerary, *Θησαύρισμα. Αριστείον Πνευματικόν εις τον Δικαίον Β. Βαγιακάκον για τα 50 χρόνια επιστημονικής παρουσίας,*

Laconian Studies 11(1992), 422, 432, subnote 28. D. V. Vagiacacos, Εισηγήσεις περί Μάνης εκ γαλλικού υπομνήματος του 1780, *Laconian Studies* 3(1977), 194–195.

49 D. V. Vayacacos, Γύρω από το μυρολόγι της Μέσας Μάνης, *Laconian Studies* 17(2004), 219–262. D. Katsoulakos, *Η Νότια Κοίλη Λακεδαίμων και τα μοιρολόγια της*, Patakis: Athens 2002. Pantou, Οι ατομικοί κολασμοί, 253.

50 Alexakis, *Τα γένη,* 216, 243. Pantou, Οι ατομικοί κολασμοί, 253–254, subnote 142.

51 Margarou, *Titles and Professional Names,* 317

52 Pantou, Οι ατομικοί κολασμοί, 253.

53 Alexakis, *Τα γένη,* 215.

54 E. P. Alexakis, Ρευστότητα των τρόπων παραγωγής και κοινωνικό πλεόνασμα στη Μάνη 1770–1900, *Ethnologia* 1(1992–1993), 39–57.

11 Womens' work in pre-industrial rural Greece. An ethnographic point of view[1]

Andromachi Economou

Modern Greek society is among the "long term" societies (according to Braudel's version of defining historical phenomena in time). It is closely connected with different – albeit, comparable – social and cultural structures of historically remote societies that present "continuity" such as the Byzantine and Post-Byzantine[2] ones as well as the Ottoman period society. However, its study needs to be placed in a specific and historically defined framework and context.

Greek society remained practically a rural one up until the first decades of the Post-War era and maintained its social, technical, and cultural structures that enable the tracing and interpretation of data in history. Until recently (1990s), scientific studies of the Greek rural space have been treating rural labour and its division by gender[3] either in an idealised, stereotypical and ideological perception (folk), or in a quantified manner based on numbers (economy, history), or totally ignoring it and placing it in a more general study and analysis of the rural space.[4] The anthropological approach of gender[5] has been very productive in Greece as well, having resulted in a considerable number of very important studies in many different sectors and topics such as those of identity, alterity, performances, representations, symbolic dimensions, consumption focused mainly on different social and ethnic-cultural groups (migrants, marginal groups and others).[6]

Although the ethnological-anthropological approach has taken an interest in the research of the social gender, it still remains for it to study and define the participation of the social subjects, as per their gender and age, in the primary and manufacturing production process, labour division – from a social and technological point of view – that defines to a great extent the social and ethnic-cultural particularities and differences.[7] However, available data on labour division per gender in the pre- and proto- industrial rural Greek society are fragmented, incomplete, scattered, and difficult to utilise as a reliable source of information.

The pre-industrial/pre-capitalist mode of production in the Greek rural society, situated between the end of the 19th century and the first Post-War decades constitute the spatio-temporal axis around which evolves the present paper that studies more specifically the place and the role of its female members (women and girls). The ethnographic material that is selectively used

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in order to shed light on specific female labour activities in the rural space is derived from research fields where we have conducted long years of field-work (1980–2020) in different regions (Attica, Boiotia, Arcadia, Messinia, Laconia, Evros, and others),[8] as well as from diverse ethnic-cultural groups in the Greek territory; briefly, Arvanites which was established gradually in Greece as of the 8th century AD, but mainly from the 14th century onwards, having come down from the region of present south Albania; Vlachs, an indigenous Latin speaking population whose activity was the semi-nomadic cattle farming that came originally from the Pindos mountain range at the north-west of Greece; and Sarakatsans, a Greek speaking indigenous population that was active in nomadic and semi-nomadic cattle rearing, located in the southern Pindos mountain range.

The basic financial/productive activities that we shall focus on and take examples from in respect to female labour are agriculture, resin collection (and more generally, the exploitation of forest resources such as charcoal and lime production), livestock and silkworm farming, and manufacturing activities, such as silk production, textile weaving and cheese making. Any attempt to generalize and standardize data, research premises, and interpretations for the whole of the Greek space would be taking away the scientific character of this approach. However, the research that we have conducted on-site in the regions above mentioned has provided in depth knowledge of the socio-economic and cultural character of female labour in targeted societies (mountain communities of Kitheron-Attica, Gortynia-Arcadia, Soufli-Evros, Bardounochoria-Laconia, and the valley communities of the province of Thebes-Boiotia among others) each one of them being a separate case study.

The domestic group, nuclear and enlarged alike, constitutes the basic productive and consumer unit and is characterized by the polyvalence of its members in matters of productive activities. Women and children in the pre-industrial Greek society are a cheap, non- recognised, invisible, informal, albeit real and reliable labour force in the effort to penetrate the farming-forest-livestock sector and invest in it. In the rural space, the domestic group functions as a production unit that is active within the community boundaries and out of it when necessary, as is the case of resin collection in remote pine forests by organised groups of men-resin harvesters, harvesting of cereals and grapes in neighbouring areas, or mine work (for example the mines of Lavrion).[9]

Woman's work is channelled as "agricultural labour" to neighbouring agricultural communities (for example in Erythres, in Aspropyrgos-Attica, in the villages in the plain of Thebes) under the label of lower, unskilled, cheap labour as it is socially underestimated ("they were starving and came here to work for pittance," as they said) and financially deserving lower wages (in money and in kind). Women form non hierarchical groups and cross over to neighbouring agricultural communities to work in the summer harvesting, grape harvesting, hoeing, weeding of the fields, and other manual rural tasks (**Figure 11.1**).[10]

The forest (as was the case of Vilia in Attica, the mountain Villages of Gortynia) was the space of gathering activities and hunting par excellence.

Figure 11.1 Harvesting the cereals at summer. Photograph, late 20th century (©author, Andromachi Economou).

Gathering was the women's preserve and they gathered plants (mainly wild herbs, aromatic plants, **Figure 11.2**) rather than animal species or products (for example snails, bee honey) in certain seasons of the year.

As a whole, these products were destined for domestic consumption, while a small part of them was commercialised, mainly by women, in the framework of a special type of markets (for example, country fairs), ensuring an extra income for them and their families. Apart from their gathering activities, women in Greek traditional society tend to the house garden that they plant with seasonal local varieties they maintain for many years,[11] as well as to the few domestic animals. Product bartering was a usual practice between households, involving mainly farming products (flour, olive oil, eggs, and others), practiced principally by women in the framework of an informal economy. This practice, which was very important for the sustainance – on a daily basis – of rural households in the Greek traditional society during the pre-industrial period, was based on the notion of mutual assistance and offer of work force in an exchange of agricultural and live stock farming labour such as mowing, grape harvesting, olive picking, sheep shearing, and others.

Resin collection, that we studied in the case of Vilia-Attica and Dervenochoria-Boiotia, was a family activity mainly, obeying a labour division scheme according to gender and age in function of the productive

Figure 11.2 Tending the house garden. Photograph, late 20th century (©author, Andromachi Economou).

process phases. Male family members were primarily and exclusively involved in the chipping of the pines, transportation, and trade of the product. Resin collection from the trees especially required complementary workforce that is almost always taken from the domestic space, and consists of women and children (boys and girls, **Figure 11.3**).

In livestock farming (as in the mountain communities of Kitheron-Attica and those of Gortynia-Arcadia), when this is not the principal productive activity, women were employed in the milking of the flock and led the animals to the milking area, in the shepherding of small flocks and in cheese making for own use, especially in the summer when it became more scarce (**Figure 11.4**).

They participated in animal shearing (*kouros*) that was the most important collective work in livestock farming and were the ones that could process and weave the wool on the home looms and make all the home woven fabrics (clothing, house equipment, **Figures 11.5a and 11.5b**). Finally, they commercialized one part of their wool production that was the outcome of their own employment. They sold themselves the products of the gathering and domestic economy (herbs, wool, wovens), thus supplementing their income.

Figure 11.3 Resin collection. Photograph, late 20th century (© author, Andromachi Economou).

Figure 11.4 Domestic sheep farming. Photograph, late 20th century (©author, Andromachi Economou).

Figure 11.5a Weaving the wool on home-looms. Photograph, late 20th century (© author, Andromachi Economou).

Figure 11.5b Unwinding the thread at the spinning wheel. Photograph, mid-20th century (© Piraeus Bank Group Cultural Foundation).

The technical division of labour among the members of the domestic group reveals that men were in charge of the more specialised and individualised tasks, while women and children were involved in collective work that required a larger workforce. Children (up to the age of 11–12 years) constitute a uniform social category undifferentiated as to gender. Boys and girls participate (from the ages of 8–12 years) in the productive process (production of resin, coal, limestone, livestock farming, agriculture)[12] in complementary, auxiliary tasks characterised by low know-how and skill, a reduced use of home-made tools, controlled access to means of production, contributing approximately 1/3 of the total required work force.[13] Women, also as well as children, participate in the collective tasks of the agricultural production process such as the harvest of cereals and pulse, grape harvesting, olive picking (**Figure 11.6**)[14] pine resin collection, emptying the kilns used for wood charcoal production, carrying wood for lime production, and shearing of the sheep, leaving the more specialised and personalised tasks to men.[15]

Figure 11.6 Gathering the olives. Photograph, late 20th century (© author, Andromachi Economou).

The account of the woman that was our information source in this instance was quite revealing of female multifaceted activities in farming and cattle raising communities:

> I must say that I didn't go (meaning to the animal herds or flocks) but when I was older, I washed, I kneeded, I weaved, no ready-made clothes back then, blankets, the bataníes (or woolen woven blankets) as we called them, rugs. Here too, I had weaved many beautiful embroidered ones, and knitted ones as well…we did the mowing, olive picking, I used to go during the night down there, we used to light up the place down there…and then we stayed down there. And we used to come back up here every Saturday in order to make bread, no bread was sold back in those days.
>
> (Psari of Tricolona-Gortynia 2007)

Women's and children's labour (boys' and girls' alike), as well as the production relations, by virtue of the entry of capital, are inscribed in a proto-capitalist framework, and are incorporated in the product as invisible and informal work (for example resin collection) but also as cheap labour (for example industrial silk production).[16] Labour is dependent on the position of the subjects in the production process and on their relation to the means of production (land, tools, know-how), these two factors being also the means for the material and social rating of it. Thus, they redeem their work force as cheap, unskilled workforce, in the agricultural sector at first, later in the industrial and, more recently, in the tourist sector. It is worth mentioning, at this point, the significant increase of women's associations in the agrifood sector, particularly in the processing of agricultural products (fruit preserves, jams, cookies, rusks), in the 80s, a good example of which are women's entrepreneurship activities in the region of Arcadia.[17]

It is particularly interesting to study the sericulture sector, that is the farming of mulberry trees, silkworm raising and silk production; the processing of cocoons and weaving of silk fabrics in the border town of Soufli (Evros-Thrace) at the passage from the pre-industrial to the industrial era.[18] Silkworm rearing became possible thanks to domestic labour with women and young girls holding the leading role in all the stages of the production process (feeding, branching, and un-branching, **Figure 11.7**).

The pre-industrial processing of the cocoon, that is the reeling (unwinding) of the silk thread, the spinning, and weaving were the exclusive preserve of women. In the silk industry started in the beginning of the 20th century in Soufli, women were employed in it at very young ages (11 or 12 years old) and became the basic workforce in sectors such as reeling, spinning, and weaving (**Figure 11.8**).[19]

These perceptions are also depicted in verse and narratives based on lived-in situations, as a collective expression of the community that needs to

Figure 11.7 Unbranching of the cocoons. Photograph, mid-20th century (© Piraeus Bank Group Cultural Foundation).

have social cohesion vis-à-vis extrinsic factors. Verse, rhythmic speech that is the songs sang during work (cereal and grape harvesting, resin collection) a creation and property of the women, performed in private or in selected, controlled public spaces is one of the most characteristic expressions of collective memory, rendering very vividly the world of labour and in a characteristic (often self-sarcastic) way the prevailing perceptions about work, natural hardships, gender based labour division, but also role complementarity, or exploitative relations. The work of resin collection, for instance, that was considered a core financial activity in the mount Kitheron region (Attica – Boiotia), is depicted through a host of emotions (compassion, sadness, irony, admiration), with the presence of men at its centre.[20] Conversely, agricultural work (cereal and grape harvest, cotton picking) but also weaving related domestic tasks (songs of the loom) are mainly self-referring and represent the female side of labour.

The following couplets were sang by women during harvest in the Arvanitikes communities of Attica and Boiotia and are characteristic of women's participation in resin collection.[21]

Figure 11.8 Working at the sericulture industry. Photograph, mid-20th century (© Michalis Patelis, Piraeus Bank Group Cultural Foundation).

Mer me moua Kopelac Take me too young man
Ou t'impied e ti t'ngas I will be picking you will be beating
N' spitova ou levent When I get back home lad
Do vin t' t'dih n' vgent I will come to help you with the pine trees

The emic speech of both women and men brings forth and reproduces differences (and inequalities) at work and the work place (close-far, inside-outside), but it also perceives and experiences them as reciprocity and complementarity, not only at work but in the frame of all social and cultural events that are part and parcel of social cohesion and reproduction of society.

In Greek continental societies with an obvious patri-linear structure and strong elements of bilaterality in their kinship and social organisation, the role and place of women and the presence of the female line are of importance, although this is not easily perceived. However, it is identified in real life conditions, ie., in the status of women and young girls in the production process, as pointed out above, and on the symbolic and imaginary levels as well.[22] By devising new ways and forms of devotional practices,

women-according to their social status and age group perform ritual and narrative events taking the lead role in local fairs with symbolic dances and improvised songs.[23] In this way, women that hold a dominant role as the vectors of the continuity and reproduction of the community have a positive influence on the land's fertility while they deterre evil, ensuring continuity and reproduction.

Generally speaking, labour in the agricultural sector, women's work in particular, finds its meaning, is perceived and rated within the society evolution and transformation process and is perceived as a historical process. A good example of this is the originally underrated and informal female work in domestic cattle farming and cheese making, which is highly rated today when demand is high for quality food products (local, traditional, pure, genuine). This value is reflected on the financial level giving prestige to women, local communities and society at large. In the framework of "new rurality," female labour and activity is looking for outlets on a co-operative-collaborative basis in service provision (food, accommodation) in sectors that have been traditionally those of women, as the latter are considered to have the necessary know-how in the afore mentioned sector.[24]

Technological changes that brought about innovations in agriculture and forestry, especially at the beginning of the Post-War era, in the 1960s and 1970s,[25] and the arrival of financial migrants (beginning of the 90s) hit female labour mainly and contributed to moving it gradually from the agricultural sector[26] and channelling it in the industrial and tertiary sector (services, tourism). However, apart from the entrepreneurial utilisation of this know-how in food and accommodation services (in the sector of agro-tourism), women in the Greek rural areas do not seem to be overturning radically and to their benefit this change of roles and status in the productive-manufacturing process, while they have almost totally disappeared from the primary production process.

In conclusion, as it has been pointed out in this article, by virtue of the examples used and the case studies referred to, the labour of women and children (boys and girls) remained complementary, unpaid and unrecognised as such in the pre-industrial/traditional agricultural Greek society. However, it supported the livelihood and the social reproduction of the rural household. Especially, during the late Post-War period (from the mid 20th century), what with the mechanisation of the farming sector, the rural exodus and urbanisation, female labour became part of the capital invested, maintaining largely its "informal" and underrated character. In the period following the Greek dictatorship, ie., from the 1980s until now, female labour in the agricultural sector was mainly focused on business activities (agrotourism, agrifood businesses, handicrafts) while it is totally absent from the primary farming sector where it is replaced by economic migrants. In our days, historical and social research is focusing on female labour giving visibility to the role of women and their contribution in modern Greek society.

Notes

1 *"La femme, malgré sa function irremplaçable dans la reproduction, n' intervient jamais comme vecteur de l'organisation sociale…Elle disparaît derrière l' homme: son père, son frère ou son époux."* C. Meillassoux, *Femmes, greniers et capitaux*, L'Harmattan: Paris 1992.

2 Of particular importance to the research of rural society and gender-based role in agricultural production and manufacturing in the Byzantine empire are the studies of A. E. Laiou-Thomadakis, *Peasant Society in the Late Byzantine Empire – A Social and Demographic Study*, Princeton University Press: Princeton N. J. 1977. A. Laiou, Agrarian Life and Economy, D. Papanikola-Bakirtzi (ed.), *Everyday Life in Byzantium*, Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Directorate of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Antiquities: Athens 2002, 49–55.

3 The study of the gender-based labour division on gender character (male-female) and corresponding definition of production activities became an excellent, historically defined, tool for research in social production relations and the transformation of human societies. It brought to the fore the importance of kinship relations and gender-based labour division, stressing women's position and role in the production process. See M. Godelier, *Horizon, trajets marxiste en anthropologie*, Maspero: Paris 1973. Meillassoux, *Femmes.* T-H. Eriksen, *Small Places, Large Issues. An Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology* (Anthropology, Culture and Society), Kritiki Publications: Athens 2007, 231 (used here in Greek edition, first published in 2001 in English, Pluto Press: London 2001).

4 These issues were more the subject of (rural) social studies, see J. Cavounidis, Capitalist Growth and Women's Employment in Greece, *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 1/2(1983), 321–338. T. Anthogalidou, *Ο ρόλος της εκπαίδευσης στην αναπαραγωγή και εξέλιξη μιας παραδοσιακής κοινωνίας. Η περίπτωση των Σαρακατσάνων της Ηπείρου*, Themelio: Athens 1987. M. Stratigaki, Agricultural Modernization and Gender Division of Labour, *Sociologia Ruralis* 28(1988), 248–262. I. Gidarakou, Εργασιακές σχέσεις στην οικογενειακή εκμετάλλευση: Θέση και προοπτικές της γυναικείας παρουσίας, *Κράτος και αγροτικός χώρος*, Papazisis: Athens 1996, 453–467. C. Safiliou, Η δυναμική του κοινωνικού αποκλεισμού των μικρών γεωργών και ιδίως των γυναικών, A. Papadopoulos (ed.), *Η ανάπτυξη σε μια πολυ-λειτουργική ύπαιθρο*, Gutenberg: Athens 2004, 85–111. T. Anthopoulou, *Rural Women and Food. Aspects and Dynamics of Entrepreneurship of Rural Women in Food Production*, vol. 1, Gutenberg: Athens 2008 (in Greek) as well as historical studies, see M. Riginos, *Μορφές παιδικής εργασίας στη βιομηχανία και τη βιοτεχνία*, Historical Archive of Greek Youth, National Hellenic Research Foundation-Section of Neohellenic Research: Athens 1995. G. Petraki, *Από το χωράφι στο εργοστάσιο: η διαμόρφωση του βιομηχανικού προλεταριάτου στο σύγχρονο Λαύριο*, Typothito: Athens 2002. L. Papastephanaki, *Labour, Technology and Gender in Greek Industry. The Textile Industry of Piraeus 1870–1940*, Crete University Press: Heraklion 2009.

5 On a more comprehensive approach of these issues see N. Skouteri-Didaskalou, *Η προβληματική του γυναικείου ζητήματος. Ανθρωπολογική προσέγγιση. Ανθρωπολογικά για το γυναικείο ζήτημα*, O Politis: Athens 1984, 13–73. E. Papataxiarhis – T. Paradellis (eds), *Ταυτότητες και φύλο στη σύγχρονη Ελλάδα*, University of Aegean – Kastaniotis: Athens 1992. A. Bakalaki (ed.) *Ανθρωπολογία, γυναίκες και φύλο*, Alexandreia: Athens 1994.

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9 Economou, *Nature, Technology and Society*, 154–160. Economou, Από τα ορεινά στα πεδινά, 671–684.

10 Economou, *Nature, Technology and Society*, 129–130.

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17 Anthopoulou, *Rural Women and Food.* Lazaridis, *Women's Work and Lives.*

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